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"TOAD OF TOAD HALL."

AT THE LYRIC.

A Play in Three Acts, by A. A. Milne, dramatised from Kenneth Grahame's book, "The Wind in the Willows," music by H. Fraser-Simson. Produced at the Lyric Theatre on Wednesday, December 17th, 1930.

Marigold ..... Wendy Toye
Nurse ..... Mona Jenkins
Mole ..... Richard Goolden
Water Rat ..... Ivor Barnard
Mr. Badger ..... Eric Stanley
Toad ..... Frederick Burtwell
Alfred ..... Peter Mather
The Back Legs of Alfred ..... R. Halliday Mason
Chief Ferret ..... Alfred Fairhurst
Chief Weasel ..... Ronald Alpe
Chief Stoat ..... William McGuigan
First Field-Mouse ..... Gordon Tucker
Second Field-Mouse ... Robert Sinclair
Policeman ..... Alban Blakelock
Gaoler ..... Alfred Fairhurst
Usher ..... Humphrey Morton
Judge ..... Alfred Clark
Turkey ..... Gordon Tucker
Duck ..... Robert Sinclair
Phœbe ..... Joan Harker
Washerwoman ..... Dorothy Fane
The White Rabbit ..... Marian Wilson
Mama Rabbit ..... Phyllis Coulthard
Lucy Rabbit ..... Daphne Allen
Harold Rabbit ..... Marcus Haig
Fox ..... Jim Soloman
Barge-woman ..... Frances Waring
A Foolish Ferret ..... Sylvia Gartside
A Brave Young Weasel ... Jill Clayton
Producer: Frank Cellier.

There may be a certain amount of doubt whether Mr. Milne has succeeded in bringing the peculiar and indefinable atmosphere of Kenneth Grahame's little classic in the realms of fantasy, "The Wind in the Willows," on to the stage. But perhaps he never attempted to do so. What he has actually done has been to provide an entertainment brimful of delights for childish hearts. Mr. Milne differs from so many writers for children in his complete, and, we think, wise avoidance of the grotesque and ugly. Nothing resembling the terrifying creations of the Brothers Grimm, for instance, is to be found in any of his works, and this feature is once more noticeable in the present very delightful play. Even the villains of the piece, the ferrets, weasels and other denizens of the Wild Wood, give the impression of being soft, rather cuddly little creatures. A visit to "Toad of Toad Hall," parents of nervous children will be pleased to know, is unlikely to have nightmarish sequels at bed time.

The story has a charming inconsequence, and is nothing more than an excuse for providing us with a series of scenes, each one of which has its full measure of favourite situations. There is the picnic by the river, when the weighty Mr. Badger sits on the basket and discourses grandiosely while hungry Mole and Rat tug feverishly at the straps. Then the arrival of Toad, the great Toad of Toad Hall that "desirable residence with a carriage sweep," in a magnificent vehicle drawn by a white horse which, needless to say, was soon on intimate and hilarious terms with the audience.

Toad in his bottle-green frock-coat and trousers is such a very grand person. But where would he be without his humble and faithful friends, Mole and Rat, and the fatherly and dependable Mr. Badger? It is they who rescue him time and again when his mania for driving high-powered motor-cars lands him into one accident and scrape after another. They give him shelter when he is lost in the Wild Wood, lend him their moral support in the scene where he is tried for exceeding the speed limit and insulting a policeman (a happy interpolation of Mr. Milne's very own), and finally helps him to win back, after a glorious fight, Toad Hall from the invading ferrets and weasels.

In the preface to the play, Mr. Milne has written that he did not see how a producer could put these extraordinary characters on the stage. We think that by now the question has been settled for him. Mr. Frank Cellier, who produced the play, and the actors have cleverly mingled the human and sub-human. Mr. Frederick Burtwell's Toad was a wonderful creation, both as regards make-up and deportment. Here was reptilian translucency allied to the solider attributes of man; one of the quaintest and most original things we have ever met in the theatre. And the suggestion of the pride which was the ruin of poor Toad, the sort of pride which carries its possessor off into a sort of trance of self-satisfaction, was most cleverly shown. Toad was a genuine revelation of a certain type of human character. Nor must we forget Mr. Richard Goolden's short-sighted, even-tempered and humble Mole, Mr. Ivor Barnard's humble and sharp-witted Rat, and Mr. Eric Stanley's lumbering Badger with the reverberating voice. All these were shrewd comments on pecies of humanity.

Alfred the horse was played by Mr. Peter Mather and Mr. R. Halliday Mason, who synchronised their movements most successfully, Miss Mona Jenkins sang quite beautifully the song of the prologue and epilogue, and Mr. Alfred Clark caught the correct, fruity legal flavour as the Judge. Mr. H. Fraser-Simson's musical accompaniment is for the most part unpretentiously pretty but occasionally, as in a quaint and haunting little carol, it rises above its own level. One of the most joyous features of the show is the dancing, in which the pupils of Miss Euphan MacLaren particularly distinguish themselves.

Belfast Hippodrome.

The rumour that the Belfast Hippodrome is to be converted into a Talkie Picture House, is not correct. The Directors have arranged with Mr. D. J. Clarke, who does the bookings, to secure all the leading Variety acts, Revues, and Productions, for the coming year.

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"SMOKY CELL."

AT WYNDHAM'S.

A Play in Three Acts, by Edgar Wallace, presented at Wyndham's Theatre on Tuesday, December 16th, 1930.

Sergeant Geissel ..... Finlay Currie
Sergeant Jackson ..... George Courtney
Lieut. Spellman ..... Ben Welden
Perryfeld, alias Ben Guinney ..... Bernard Nedell
Lieut. Lavine ..... Percy Parsons
Sergeant Reil ..... Bennett O'Loghlen
Patrolman Connor ..... Charles Farrell
Captain Tricks O'Regan ... Harold Huth
Lem Petersen ..... Roy Emerton
Ferdinand Steinberg ... Alexander Knox
Police Motor Cyclist ... Charles Farrell
A Doctor ..... C. Hampden
1st Guard ..... Sydney Seaward
Death House Guard "Dummy" ..... Grosvenor North
2nd Guard ..... Walter Langley
Chief Guard Morgan ..... James Carew
A Guard in the Death House ..... B. J. Dawes
Driver ..... Douglas Ross
Producer: Edgar Wallace.

With the sentence "It is coming to this, that in America you have got to pay if you want to live," staring at us rather portentiously from the programme, it seemed at first that Mr. Wallace intended to explore and explain transatlantic social conditions. His play, however, turned out to be one of pure action, entirely unencumbered by thought. There was a first scene in which we were informed, somewhat laboriously perhaps, that things had come to such a pass in Chester County that the racketeers were levying blackmail upon victims in fear of their lives. All the smaller rackets had been pushed out by this latest and most sinister development of organised crime.

But this explanation, with its glimpses of graft in the police force itself, of smooth villains strolling unmolested into police headquarters, and of a wealthy population craven with fear over, the play resolved itself into a single combat of wits, with quick and surprising developments, between the incorruptible Chief of Police, Captain Tricks O'Regan, and Ben Guinney, the "big noise" in gangdom.

And a very breathless entertainment it afforded too. The cinema having learned to talk, Mr. Wallace has shown in this play that the stage can go silent and remain absorbing. One of the most original and effective scenes in the play depicts O'Regan, a marked man with his gangster foe at large, thanks to a daring escape from the Death House, or "Smoky Cell" itself, returning alone to his apartment late at night. Not a word is spoken throughout, but the audience is kept taut and expectant as it watches the man exploring on tip-toe his silent and empty room, alert and expectant. We become aware of a fearful, lurking menace.

Some of the other effects, perhaps owing to hasty rehearsal, did not quite succeed. A gun went off accidentally at one of the most critical moments, and a few of the incidents lacked the true, slick Wallace touch and became blurred and incomprehensible. But in spite of these faults the play as a whole gripped the audience with its quick-moving and exciting panorama of the underworld, which compensated largely for the lack of the clever psychology and acute characterisation of "On the Spot."

Mr. Harold Huth is hardly the man we would have thought of to cast as the devil-may-care Irishman, O'Regan. But in spite of his occasional difficulties with the accent, he proved capable of tackling heroic as well as villainous rôles. He was particularly successful in portraying nervous tension, with his drawn-in body like a cat about to spring. Mr. Bernard Nedell was a smooth, apparently good-humoured, yet none the less terrifying gangster chief. One of his scenes, a monologue in the death cell addressed to a mute warder (played with silent expressiveness by Mr. Grosvenor North) left a deep impression. Mr. Percy Parsons was a laconic and snarling policeman-crook, while Mr. Ben Welden, as an honest colleague, exuded trustworthiness and smiled cherubically. Mr. Charles Farrell, as a patrolman who refused duty in a dangerous area, cleverly differentiated between fear and panic, and Mr. Alexander Knox, as one of the threatened wealthy four hundred, displayed an extremity of apprehension while still suggesting that his spirit as a man was unbroken. Other neat and well-defined studies of character came from Mr. Roy Emerton, as a dull-witted and unimaginative criminal, and Mr. James Carew, fatherly and efficient as a chief guard in the prison.

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WANTED TO THANK all those musicians who replied to my advertisement in "The Era" dated December 10th. The Advertiser, Box 80.

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Dated December 15th, 1930.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that **FREDERICK ARTHUR BAKER, ANTHONY LEICESTER STANFORD HOLME** and **EDWARD WILKINSON**, trading as Pioneer Players and carrying on business at 117a, Priory-road, N.W.6, intend to apply to Oxford Borough Council for registration under the above-named Act.

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H. FENTON,
SURVEYOR.

Council Offices,
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Blackpool.
December 11th, 1930.

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SEASON 1931.

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F. W. ALLEN,
Clerk of the Council.

The Council Offices,
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December 19th, 1930.

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THE AMATEUR THEATRE.

Notices of other Amateur Activities on page 4.

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The first performance by an amateur society of Arnold Ridley and Bernard Merivale's exciting comedy drama, "The Wrecker," was that undertaken by Lloyds Bank Dramatic Society at the Scala Theatre recently. The success of such a production must necessarily depend to no small extent upon efficient staging and effects and the society faced and overcame these difficulties in praiseworthy fashion.

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The name-part was undertaken by Mr Harold Thompson who, realising its dramatic possibilities, gave a thrilling, albeit well-controlled performance. As the fellow who succeeds in tracking him down, Mr. Roy W. Pannell was suitably cast and Messrs. R. C. Dockerill and John C. Delooze stood out prominently with the finished representations of other important rôles. Messrs. George L. Taunt and A. C. Chambers were responsible for much of the comedy element as the two signalmen, and the two principal female parts were capably filled by Miss Joan Harcourt and Miss Cecilia Comber. A word of praise must be added for the stage manager, Mr. Gerald Matthews.

WESTMINSTER BANK D. & O.S.

The Westminster Bank Dramatic and Operatic Society presented "Yellow Sands" at King George's Hall on December 13th, and it proved to be one of the best amateur performances of Eden and Adelaide Phillpotts' popular three-act comedy we have seen. Mr. H. Collier Grounds scored heavily with Richard Varwell, the old ne'er-do-well brother of Jenifer Varwell. He was excellent and made the character a truly humorous one. Miss Lilian H. Davis as the grasping sanctimonious Mary Varwell, also gave a first-class performance. As Joe Varwell, Mr. D. Llewelyn Davies spoke his lines well and with great force, and Miss Winifred Taylor played the difficult part of Jenifer Varwell very creditably, although she did not always give one the impression of great age. Miss Young and Miss Whatley rather over-acted as the twins Minnie and Nelly Masters. Miss Joan Day as Emma Major, Mr. J. R. Ambridge as Arthur Varwell, Mr. G. W. Todd as Mr. Baslow, Mr. E. Drummond Lass as Thomas Major, and Miss Phyllis Graham-Roe as Lydia Blake, all contributed satisfactory performances.

Mr. Victor Houchin who produced for the Society is to be congratulated on his good work, and the Orchestral Society supplied pleasing incidental music during the interval.

KINGSTON O. & D.S.

It is some time since the Kingston and District Operatic and Dramatic Society produced a Gilbert and Sullivan opera, but this year the selection committee chose "Princess Ida" to open the season, four performances being given at the Surbiton Assembly Rooms.

Len Eastland, with his commanding stage presence, portrayed King Hildebrand as a noble and kingly figure. Chief honours were extended to Leslie Frank, in the part of the diminutive King Gama. His make-up was effective and he gave due emphasis to the eccentricities of the part. Victor Mould provided some good rollicking fun and in company with John England and Charles E. Seaman, gave infinite enjoyment. Cyril Baker, with his powerful voice, was ably supported by Clifford H. Reynolds and Ronald Rateliffe.

The femenine side of the cast was a decided asset to the production, Stella Crews in the title rôle proving a tremendous favourite. Winifred Manly vested her part with dignified qualities, her fine contralto voice being heard to good advantage. Elsie Randall was very dainty and charming all the way through the show, and Kathleen Mumby acted in capable style. The chorus, some forty strong, sang extremely well; the staging, mounting and dresing left nothing to be desired, while the fine orchestra was efficiently controlled by A. A. Gregory. The Society's producer is Thomas J. Lamb.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL D.C.

The present rage of war plays and war stories evidently caused the L.C.C. Dramatic Club to choose "The Saving Grace" for presentation at the Cripplegate Theatre recently, for though this play is not actually concerned with the war, it deals with life and views at the beginning of the War, and that section of the audience who could cast their minds back to the days when they themselves "joined up," must have been very interested in the revival.

The performance was distinguished by some pleasant acting. Miss Hattie Devonshire is particularly to be commended for a sweet and sympathetic characterisation as Mrs. Corbett. There is a sort of dry, grim humour in that curious character, Blinn Corbett that Mr. Spencer Leeming did not quite realise, but his blustering touch amused the audience. Mr. Wilfred Rouse seemed particularly well cast as Ripley Guildford, for he found this part well within his powers and gave a pleasing performance. Miss Kate Rouse was good as Susan Blaine, but Miss Ann Richardson had not sufficient repose as Mrs. Guildford, concerning herself too much with mannerisms expressing contempt, impatience, etc. Her voice, however, is very suitable to stage work.

The two servant parts were played with an easy style by Miss Doris Pratley and Mr. Francis Richardson, Miss Pratley particularly having an attractive manner of delivery which made itself felt in spite of the smallness of her part. The somewhat long intervals were relieved of much tedium by the welcome interpolation of the Bon Acord Orchestra, a very efficient group of musicians.

SANDERSTEAD D.C.

"Milestones" is not an easy play for amateurs to present, and it was not surprising to find, on our visit to Sanderstead Hall, the members of the local dramatic club somewhat out of their element. The production work of Mr. S. H. Polley was well carried out, and the scenery, designed and executed by members of the club, under the direction of Mr. Alan E. Chattin, was commendable. Miss Marie Cox sustained the part of Gertrude Rhead with feeling, while Miss D. Sherman displayed understanding as Rose Sibley. Mr. H. Hayman was not happily cast as Sam Sibley: Mr. V. C. Paul was an easeful Ned Pym (later Lord Monkhurst); and Mr. E. P. Leftwich depicted with some success the rôle of John Rhead. Mr. Noll Barwick, as Arthur Preece, played with conviction and was one of the successes of the production. Miss Gwen McIntyre was a sympathetic Emily Rhead and Miss Madge Ramsden did justice to the part of Nancy Sibley. The youthful trio in act three, Lord Monkhurst (Mr. D. C. Maclean), Nancy Sibley (Miss Girlie Privett) and Richard Sibley (Mr. P. R. Cerely) were natural. Miss Marjorie Verner was the elderly Mrs. Rhead, and the butlers, Thompson and Webster, were played by Mr. P. Naish and Mr. V. L. Outley. The Marlborough Orchestra entertained with selections during the evening.

DELPHIC D.S.

The Delphic's production of "Her Shop" at the Cripplegate Institute was well received. The play, written by Aimee and Philip Stuart, is about the upper classes, and is a pleasant enough comedy with a sprinkling of smart lines. The principal character, Lady Mary, stood out as portrayed by Dora Landau. Mr. Leonard Courtenay was admirable as Mr. Henry; Helen Misener gave a perfect character study as Miss Muchison; and David Klein and Robert Brown caused a few laughs as Messrs. Macdonald and Jacobs. Gertrude Spiers and Dolores Cardozo were distinctive as models and good work was done by Agnes Abney (Jane), Dorothy White (Mrs. Bill), Amy Gilbert (Miss Lottie), Ronald Harris (Gilbert Smith) and Elsa Harris (Hebe).

The production was very slick and credit is due to Leonard Courtenay for ability in this direction. F. B. Sholto is to be praised for his stage management. The Endsleigh Trio were appreciated for some bright musical items.

EAGLE D. & O.S.

A becoming sense of farce characterised the performance by The Eagle D. and O.S. of "The Whole Town's Talking," at King George's Hall. From the stir caused by Mr. George Spooner's entrance, it was evident that he is generally considered to be "a bit of a wag" and this reputation he proceeded to uphold in his subsequent performance of Chester Binney, which caused hearty roars of laughter.

Mr. Alfred Hawkins gave a remarkably forceful and whole-hearted impersonation of a jealous film director—one of the best achievements of the evening. Mr. Lawrence Gowdey played Henry Simmons intelligently, but even his good make-up could not disguise the fact that he was hardly mature enough for the part.

Miss Isobel Sinclair made a pleasant Mrs. Simmons and Miss Beryl Rankin looked appropriately decorative as her daughter Ethel. To Miss Betty Tanous was given the responsibility of impersonating a film star of magnitude, and it is only fair to say that she did it very well. There was a nice little maid's part which Miss Eve Slooper played very brightly, and a difficult though small one of a lisping flapper which Miss Lilian Frankland achieved very creditably. Mr. Frank King looked like a picture from the cover of the Saturday "Evening Post," and thus struck the right note as Roger Shields. Miss Lilian Harris was a snappy dancing mistress and Mr. Sidney Atkinson, as a taxi driver, completed the cast.

SUTTON A.D.C.

The Sutton Amateur Dramatic Club gave a highly satisfactory performance of "Interference" at the local Public Hall. Mr. Horace Whitaker was quite convincing as Sir John Marley. Miss Joan Mothersdale, in the rôle of Lady Marley, acted with tenderness and feeling. In humorous vein, Mr. H. Constanduros made a success of Doctor Puttock, Mr. Billy Goring showed understanding in his handling of the part of Philip Voaze (a satisfying piece of work), and as Inspector Haines, Mr. Rupert Waring gave a capital characterisation. In the difficult rôle of Deborah Kane, Miss Muriel Fells did exceedingly well, and suitable studies came from Mr. W. G. Cressy, as Douglas Halder, and Mr. Miles Prance as the fustian journalist, Joseph Craghurst. The servants—Childers, Fred and Mrs. Barmo—were played respectively by Mr. Harry Alden, Mr. Kenneth Ede and Miss Winifred Sadler, in intelligent manner, and Mr. John Bourne acted P.c. Cleaver on accepted lines. A clever presentation was that of Miss Joan Fowler, as Mrs. Florence Rooke, and her niece Barbara received pleasing treatment from Miss Doris Corsan. Mr. Cyril Lawrence was responsible for this, the Club's sixty-fourth, production.

HAMPSTEAD PLAYERS.

The Hampstead Players presented A. A. Milne's drama. "The Fourth Wall," on December 11th and 12th, at St. Stephen's Hall, Haverstock-hill, to a nicely-filled house at each performance. What struck us most favourably from the first word, was the unusually clear and correct diction of all the players, to whom it was a pleasure to listen apart from the "book." Add to this a nice sense of acting on the part of all concerned and the enthusiastic band of players should be successful in whatever cause for which they perform. The action of Arthur Ludgrove was undertaken with the correct amount of tension, and the consequent unfolding of the plot by the two young people was duly manipulated without any abatement of the mystery atmosphere which was sustained splendidly from beginning to end.

Ian Service was undoubtedly to the fore as the villianous Carter, and Alick McClure was satisfactory as the other criminal. Evelyn Service as Susan and Richmond Clark as Jimmy, had the sympathies of all the audience. Arthur Knolly was very natural as Arthur Ludgrove. Molly Bolton supplied comedy as the langorous Jane West. Holford Strevens as Major Fothergill, Kathleen Sharp as Mrs. Fane, Guy Johnson, a natural butler; John Powell and Douglas Service as policemen, completed the cast. The play was well produced by Denys Erlam.

HIGHBURY QUADRANT LADIES.

A very praiseworthy attempt at Sheridan's "Critic" was made by the Highbury Quadrant Ladies' Dramatic Club on Thursday and Saturday at the hall of the Congregational Church in aid of the Organ Restoration Fund, which should benefit to an appreciable extent by two good houses. After the first performance, a prologue, composed and sent by an anonymous supporter, was read by Miss Eva Saunderson, L.R.A.M., the producer, and applauded. It was interesting to see how almost entirely these clever ladies depended on their acting powers since the stage did not lend itself to any big crowds or effects, and great credit is due to the producer and stage manager for their shares in making the presentation successful. In particular, the make-up of the ladies, especially in the male rôles, is to be commended.

The principals earned praise by their enunciation, stage bearing, and feats of memory, the prompter being hardly in evidence at all. In the prologue, good work was done by Gladys Engel and Jeannette Husson as Mr and Mrs. Dangle, Marguerite Waller as Mr. Sneer, Elsie Brand as Sir Fretful Plagiary, Nesta Price as Mr. Puff, Doris Butler, Millicent Winterbourne, Millie Varwell, Margaret Grant, Christine Grant, Bessie Witty, Hilda Moody, and Alice Hadfield, whilst the characters in the play caused much laughter as portrayed by Millie Varwell, Grace Gardner, Christine Grant, Helen Forsyth, Millicent Winterbourne Margaret Grant, Doris Butler, Margaret Banfield, Bessie Witty, Elsie Brand, Kate Nevett, Hilda Moody, Jeannette Husson and Nancy and Dennis Varwell. Alice Hadfield was stage manager.

QUEENSBOROUGH PLAYERS.

This Society gave a performance of "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep"—the farcical comedy by Jan Hay and P. G. Wodehouse—at the Women's Service Hall, Tufton-street, on December 9th. The play seemed to have been quite well produced by Miss Valerie Dermond, who also played a leading part, but the stage was rather on the small side. One definitely bad thing was the way in which on several occasions people crossed the back of the stage, during the act, exposed to the view of the audience through the French windows. Surely this could have been avoided.

The general standard of acting was fairly high. About the best individual performance was that of R. A. L. Marley as Hugo Bonsor. He was excellent in the luncheon scene and, indeed, all the time he was a pseudo curate. Valerie Desmond did well as Chickie and acted with plenty of spirit, though her American accent was at times very questionable. C. S. Rowden and John H. Goodman provided an amusing contrast as the brothers Wyndrum—Walpole the disapproving Earl of Tuckleford and Aubrey—rather a simple soul—the locum tenens. E. C. Grover was quite good as the affected Osbert Bassington-Bassington. Dinah White made the most of the part of Hermia, and Charles Bernard provided some humour as a country Police-Sergeant—as did also Marguerite Bryan as Mrs. Pottle. The other rôles were all satisfactorily taken. The collapse of the coach in the third Act produced some unrehearsed humour. We note that a changed cast performed on the second night.

THE O.C.'S DRAMATIC CO.

An ambitious offering for an amateur company was that presented recently at Earlham Hall, Forest Gate. It was Roland Pertwee and Harold Dearden's three-act play, "Interference," of which a full house showed their appreciation of the actors' efforts by their generous applause at the end of each act. The play, of course, offers several dramatic situations, of which advantage was often taken, with consequent success. The evening, however, was the producer's and, with his exception and one or two others, however, most of the actors "walked" through their parts with little or no effort, their voices, in some cases, being hardly loud enough for an ordinary drawing-room. John A. Bentley, the producer, gave undoubtedly the best show of the evening as Philip Voaze, besides prompting others at the same time. Margaret Barton portrayed in buoyant fashion the character of Barbara. Gerald A. Youlton and Sidney F. Fish doubled the rôles of a police doctor and inspector respectively with that of journalists and were not much like either. John A. Godbehere as another newspaper man was little more convincing. Claud Gwinn gave an impressive and restrained performance as Sir John Marlay, and Reginald Freeman was a human and natural manservant. Margaret Walter as Lady Marlay, cannot be accused of over-acting in any way. In fact, it was with great difficulty at times that we heard her at all. Gladys Colverd did her best as Deborah Kane, and the cast also included Winifred Wood as Mrs. Rooke, William Manhood as a hall porter, Albert Gunter and John Claxton as an inspector and policeman respectively and Violet Long as a maid. A little attention to the make-up on the male side would have been an improvement.

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NEW CINEMAS OPENED.

MAGNIFICENCE AND COMFORT IN LONDON'S LATEST THEATRES.

The Trocadero.

There was a Press view on Friday afternoon last of the enormous new cinema at the Elephant and Castle, called the Trocadero. It is a very imposing structure, having a huge frontage to the New Kent-road, and, of course, is easily accessible from all parts of London. Mr. Sid Hyams showed us over the new building, and contrasted the difference between this wonderful cinema and the first he built in 1912. There is plenty of light in the main vestibule, and one soon "spots" the passenger lift, and notices that the pay-boxes, in the latest Underground style, have automatic ticket and change-giving machines. Waiting rooms have been built instead of a café. As Mr. Hyams explained to us, his business is to get as many people into his cinema as possible, and not catering.

When one gets one's first glimpse of the interior of the Trocadero, its vastness is not too apparent. From the front of the circle, which is 140 feet wide and the largest in the country, this is especially so. From the back of the circle one feels the "bigness" of the new enterprise more, and looking down on to the stage from this point is almost a thrill. A full view of stage and screen can be obtained from every seat. We tested this, but wondered how a single turn would fare on that stage across the vast auditorium. So Mr. Phil Hyams, for our benefit, carried on an ordinary conversation with brother Sid from the stage to the back of the circle, and clearly demonstrated that the acoustics are perfect.

We inspected the ventilation system whereby the huge extract fan draws the vitiated air through the floors from all parts of the building, and then visited the projection room. This should be the envy of all operators—it is a magnificent chamber in itself. There are three complete Western Electric talking machines and a Brenograph effects machine, capable of producing any colour effect under the sun. The Trocadero claims to be the only theatre in the country equipped with a dual sound system, so avoiding any possibility of a breakdown. The lighting on the stage and in the auditorium is also controlled from the projecting room. An iron shutter is in front of each machine, which automatically drops in the case of an emergency, thus cutting off this room from the rest of the theatre, and as the cables and wiring are installed in special double walls the maximum of safety is ensured for the operators.

The penum plant chambers are interesting. We saw here the control boards where, by just shifting a lever, temperatures can be varied by the engineer in control over any part of the building. Thus, if an attendant, say, in the back of the circle on the left hand side signals that the temperature there is too hot or too cold, it can immediately be rectified. These plenum plant chambers wash, dry, warm and perfume the incoming air before it is forced through the various parts of the ceiling.

Although the circle has such a huge span it has no intermediate supports, thus ensuring an uninterrupted view of the stage and screen from every seat in the stalls. The stage itself is enormous, as befits a theatre of this size. The actual seating capacity, Mr. Sid Hyams told us, is 4,500, with over 6,000 capacity. Thus, by the way, as to the stage, all apparatus for the control of scenery, curtains and battens is electrically controlled or moved by counter-weighting system. The massive fire curtain weighs over twelve tons and can easily be operated by one man, and should necessity arise, can be lowered in twenty seconds. There are three loud-speaker horns and two screens, one of which can be extended to the whole width of the proscenium. Back-stage the arrangements are just as complete. There are ten dressing-rooms—we went in one or two of them—and they are plentifully supplied with mirrors and the lighting in these could well be copied in other dressing-rooms to the advantage of artists.

The organ, it is claimed, is the largest Wurlitzer organ in the world. It cost £15,000 and we heard it played on Friday by Mr. Quentin Maclean. He is to broadcast on it each week through the B.B.C. It is a wonderful instrument. We went into one of the four organ chambers, and it was a revelation to see the hundreds of thousands of component parts that go to make it up. There is a gymnasium for the staff, and compulsory physical exercises under Gunner Moir, who used to be on the managerial side at the Canterbury, are a feature. There is also a first-aid room, well fitted. Earphones have been fitted to a number of seats for the deaf. We tested one of these and found it very effective.

It is good news that a policy of variety and films is to be followed at the Trocadero. Mr. Sid Hyams assured us that it was a definitely consistent policy that would be continuous. A real flesh and blood orchestra is also to play, and it is interesting to note that their music is amplified into all the waiting rooms.

The theatre was opened on Monday evening.

THE FORUM.

South Kensington's magnificent new picture theatre, the Forum, which was described in last week's "The Era," was opened on Thursday night, the ceremony being undertaken by Councillor Gordon Bird, the Mayor of Kensington. He was supported on the stage by Mr. Herbert Yapp, managing director, and Mr. Stanley Beard, the architect; and there were also present Sir Arthur Yapp, Mr. Walter Forde, Mr. John Maxwell, Mr. J. V. Bryson, Mr. Donald Calthrop, the Mayoress of Chelsea and the Mayor of Fulham.

Included in the programme was a highly interesting film depicting the construction of the new theatre, and the other pictures were "The Storm," and a Mickey Mouse cartoon.

There were also some capital stage turns by Clapham and Dwyer, Don and Luis, and the Forum Festivities Girls.

LEICESTER SQUARE THEATRE.

Punctually at 8.30 on Friday evening, the orchestra at the new Leicester-square Theatre were raised on their dais and the strains of the National Anthem sounded throughout the building. The house was crowded with a distinguished audience. It seems to be the policy nowadays to engage the Victoria Girls as mascots in opening a new cinema. They certainly had a magnificent reception for their brilliant dancing here. They had new frocks for the occasion; pretty confections of blue and yellow, and they danced two dances in them as attractively and as cleverly as ever. Then they changed into bathing costumes and danced a concerted and finally individual efforts that revealed just how clever these girls are, individually and collectively.

The other variety turn was Bolliol and Merton, and the entirely new and sensational dancing presentation of these two was also loudly applauded. They opened with a clever enough dance, and after a violin recital, the curtain went up to reveal a full set with a huge staircase up the centre. At the top was an idol. Miss Merton mounts the stairs and kneels before the god; her partner comes in and espies her, rushes up, and there follows some of the most wonderful falls we have seen. Down the stairs, singly and together, they roll almost madly until at the finale a priest comes in and pushes the male partner from top to bottom. They still do that sensational "jump." This is introduced at the beginning of this scena.

The Leicester-square Symphony Orchestra, under the leadership of Mr. J. Hayden Fawcett, played extremely well, and the audience were also able to appreciate the good work on the organ of Mr. Frank Newman, F.R.C.O.

"Viennese Nights," a Warner Brothers' Vitaphone Production, filmed entirely in technicolour, was the big attraction. This is from an original story by Oscar Hammerstein, with music by Sigmund Romberg, and directed by Alan Crosland. This is all about Vienna, as one may gather from the title, and love and symphony are closely allied in the telling of the story. The photography is really beautiful, most of the colouring being exquisite. There are some grand tunes in "Viennese Nights," too. The principals were Alexander Gray (Otto), Jean Hersholt (Hofner), Walter Pidgeon (Franz), Bert Roach (Gus), Louise Fazenda (Gretel), Alice Day (Barbara) and Vivienne Segal (Elsa), and they acted well and sang delightfully. "The Movietone News," "Little Covered Wagon," a Gaumont "chimp" comedy, and another film not on the programme about "Slim's" adventures, were other features of the opening.

The Leicester-square Theatre was designed for its promoters, of which Sir Walter Gibbons is the chief, by Mr. Andrew Mather, L.R.I.B.A., as a house equipped for all types of entertainment. Dressing room accommodation and artists' rooms are fully provided. One innovation is that a lift has been planned to serve all artists, both chorus and principals, from the stage level to all floors. The theatre holds 2,000 people and it is claimed that every seat has an uninterrupted view of the stage and is within easy hearing range of the spoken word. For the first time in this country, the "Berliner" system of acoustics and tests have been introduced. There are sixteen private boxes, and ample accommodation in the entrance halls, foyers and stairs. The fireproof curtain is a painting of Leicester-square as it appeared in 1754, and is very picturesque.

Besides Sir Walter Gibbons, Mr. Adney Gibbons is on the Board of Directors. Mr. Walter Bentley is to supervise the conduct of the theatre, and Mr. W. H. Thornton is the general manager. As we have seen before in other West End houses, Mr. Thornton is an expert at his job. Performances are to be continuous daily from 12 noon till 11 p.m., Sundays, 6 to 11 p.m., and prices range from 1s. 6d. to 8s. 6d., with the sixteen boxes at 10s. 6d. and £1 1s.

MAX MILLER

Enormous Success Last Week on return to the

CAFE DE PARIS

"THE DRAGOMAN" says in the

DAILY EXPRESS

The people who go regularly to smart restaurants and clubs fancy themselves to be extremely sophisticated. But even they can tire of the endless repetition by a slightly varied selection of singers of the same inane American songs; of the same monotonous exhibition dances. It was extremely interesting accordingly to observe the **enthusiastic reaction** of the spectators at a restaurant in Coventry-street to the turns on the programme. For each was in its way unusual. One **(a genuine music-hall comedian with grotesque clothes and a Cockney accent) imported a revitalising breath of the East End into this jaded West End atmosphere.** An unusually large number of well-known people applauded.

MAX MILLER

A RIOT IN THE MUSIC-HALLS, IS JUST AS GOOD IN CABARET

Direction: JULIUS DAREWSKI

FILM NOTES.

Authors for Hollywood.

It certainly does look as if Hollywood is realising the importance of the author in the making of films. Of course, the triumph of the "talkie" has had something to do with this tardy realisation of what should have been self-evident all along; and the British studios can take credit for showing the way to America in this regard. There was a time, and not so very long ago either, when the American producers were quite content to buy a best-seller or a successful play and then give it over to the tender mercies of their scenario writers. The result usually was that when the film appeared, the original author could not recognise his own work.

The "talkies" have made it imperative that the dialogue should bear a resemblance to that of the original story or play, and consequently Hollywood is waking up to the fact that the author must be called into active co-operation. Indeed, the producers are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain suitable stories, and it is becoming more and more evident that authors will have to be persuaded to write original scenarios for the pictures.

Mr. Sam Goldwyn is one of the few American producers who has always appreciated story-value in the making of a film, and one of the main objects of his present trip to Europe was to "sign up" eminent authors. Two of the men he has induced to sail back with him next month are Mr. Michael Arlen and Mr. Walter Hackett. They are to collaborate in a comedy-drama which is provisionally called "What Fun Frenchman Have," and Ronald Colman is to play the leading rôle.

Mr. Shaw's First Talkie.

Mr. Bernard Shaw's "talkie" version of his short play, "How He Lied to Her Husband," is to have its West End première at the Carlton on January 5th. There have been many stories, most of them imaginary, of how Mr. Shaw helped in the production of the picture, but even if he did not roll on the studio floor to demonstrate how a tussle should be conducted between two of the characters, he has taken a paternal interest in the production at Elstree, including the choice of both director and leading lady. By the way, it is not true that "Candida" is included as a screen preface to the new film. Later, there will be another Shaw "talkie" of "Arms and the Man," which will probably derive more from "The Chocolate Soldier" than the original comedy.

Evelyn Laye's Success.

It is easy to prohesy that the first showing of "One Heavenly Night," at the Tivoli, will be one of the chief Boxing Day events. Evelyn Laye has already shown what she can do in silent films, but this is her first appearance in a "talkie," and she is credited with a triumphant success.

Mary's New Leading Man.

Reginald Denny, who is to play opposite Mary Pickford in "Kiki," is a screen actor who has won distinction in many dare-devil rôles. His father was W. H. Denny, a famous Savoyard, and Reginald made his way into films in America, through musical comedy and opera. Like Ronald Colman, he was born at Richmond. "Kiki" has already been produced on the stage as a comedy and a musical piece. Gladys Cooper and Owen Nares played the principal parts when the play was done at the Playhouse, and Ella Retford was the Kiki in the musical version.

Film Firm's New Home.

Vaults on the top floor sounds rather like an architectural paradox, but it is none the less a fact in the new home of Radio Pictures at the Oxford-street end of Dean-street. To commemorate the completion of the new premises, there was an "at home" with many prominent men and women in the film industry attending.

The reception office on the first floor is so invitingly furnished and palatially decorated that waiting to be attended to would be an enviable experience, but the executive staff offices are arranged to provide for the maximum of efficiency in service. Also on this floor is one of the most luxurious little sound theatres ever imagined.

But it is on the top floor where some of the most interesting and important work will be done. Here are cutting and repairing shops where films will be edited and assembled, while one section of the floor is given up to several small fireproof "vaults." Here films will be stored. The little chambers are divided by stoutly-built stone partitions and each has its own sprinkler, so as to minimise any risk of a fire spreading. A visit to the new premises shows that administrative and executive headquarters of the film companies are as important in the scheme of things as the magnificent new cinemas.

Shakespeare and Music.

Shakespeare has one hundred and forty allusions to music in his plays. They consist chiefly of tribute to the art as consoler, or inspirer of the mind, and some of that tribute is as fine as any that has been paid to music. It would appear, also, that he had some technical knowledge of it. At least he could, as in the "Taming of the Shrew," quote some of its technical detail. But some of England's greatest musicians were living when Shakespeare lived, and it is not at all unlikely that the foregathering of kindred spirits of that time in London inns often found the great poet in cordial fellowship with men of music.

THE AMATEUR THEATRE.

BALHAM STROLLERS O.S.

The Balham Strollers O.S. celebrated their coming-of-age as a costume playing Society, by giving the first amateur performance of Edgar Wallace's popular musical play, "The Yellow Mask," under the direction of Mr. Rupert M. Heath, at the Balham Hippodrome for a whole week. This was an ambitious attempt—but the Company come through creditably.

Mr. Douglas Sherwood's personality and complete confidence are great assets for the stage, and his voice though not overstrong, is pleasant, and he sings with intelligent emphasis. His performance as Captain Carn was therefore pleasing, and his rendering of those two popular numbers "Mary" and "Half a Kiss" was effective, partnered as he was by Miss Gwen Gibbs, an appealing and dainty Mary Bannister.

Mr. W. P. Dobson was particularly well-cast as Li-San, and gave a remarkably impressive performance of this sinister Chinese Governor. In excellent contrast was Mr. D. Richard Gilder's bland and smiling Al-Song, and the acting of these two clever members of the "Strollers" deserves every praise.

Miss Cecilia Lawless worked, sang, and danced very hard and conscientiously as Molly Vane, but the truth of the matter is that comedy work is not her forte. She should look to a tendency to muffle her words when speaking and singing! Mr. Ernest Sharpe made a happy-go-lucky Bertie Bannister, but since there is not a great deal of humour in the part of Sam Slider, Mr. Fred Shipp's rendering of it seemed a little thin. Miss Gladys Dane gave a well-sung solo as the Empress of China, and Miss Dorothy Banks made a dignified adventuress as Sylvia Maine.

A bevy of unselfconscious and graceful ladies of the chorus added to the attractions of the piece, which was undoubtedly good amusement, owing in great part to the efforts of Mr. Herbert Dykes, the hard-working musical director, and his efficient orchestra.

R. A. M. STUDENTS.

Dramatic performances of Barrie's "Quality Street" were given by the students of the Royal Academy of Music on December 12th and 13th in the Duke's Theatre, under the direction of A. Acton-Bond. The characters were played by a mixed cast on Friday and on Saturday were all played by female students. Easily outstanding at the first performance was the portrayal of Phoebe by Anne V. Baker, who was also responsible for the arrangement of the dance in Act II, and was one of the general stage managers. Miss Baker's work contained all the qualities of a more mellowed actress, with few of the generally accompanying defects. She seems to be the star student, judging by her accomplishments and if she choose, should certainly be heard of professionally.

The entire production went without a hitch and Mr. Acton-Bond has every reason to congratulate himself on the results of his fine direction.

Good work was also shown by Helen MacPherson (general stage manager), Dorothy Medd, Barbara Kelly, Doreen Radcliffe and William Worsley, and the remainder of the principal parts were well undertaken by Cyril Gell, George Kimm, Rachel Ezekiel, Marjorie Vine, Joan Rayner, Mabel Short and Elizabeth Hack. The schoolchildren were portrayed by Gwen Barclay, Katherine Leverson, Brighid O'Donnell, Rosalind Home, Catherine Ainaud, Dorothy Rowntree and Gladys Nyren.

The principal rôles on the second night were played by Patricia Pellowe, Joan Swan, Nancy Dugon, Kathleen Knight, Roma Harris, Norma Wilson, Anna Labuschagne, Enid Percival, Lyndall Frost, Joan Rayner, Gladys Nyren, Vivienne Assersohn, Nancy Nuttall and Peggy de Fontaine and Joan Westaway as a schoolchild.

Patricia Pellowe and Barbara Kelly, who had rehearsed the plays, were in charge of the stage. Musical interludes, three Swiss folk-songs by Otto Ernst, who also conducted, Entr'acte and Ballet Music from Schubert's "Rosamunde," and Järnefelt's "Præludium," were well rendered by the orchestra.

THE SUNGLOW PLAYERS.

A presentation of very high standard was given by the Sunglow on December 2nd, when they performed that particularly charming comedy, "A Damsel in Distress" at King George's Hall in aid of Charing Cross Hospital, and gained about £70 thereby. All the players, in fact, were responsible for such good acting that it was with great astonishment that we heard that this was the first performance of the Society. All concerned worked together as though they had been practising for seasons!

Mr. J. H. Derrick Smith was a sympathetic George Bevan, and Miss Margaret Bing full of humour and personality as Lady Maud. Mr. H. Stanley Horwood made a very effective Percy, Miss Claire Willoughby Davies was well cast as Alice Faraday, and Mr. Fredk. H. Pratt was in high favour for his rendering of Reggie.

How nice it was to hear Miss Mary Lincoln Reed rolling out Billie Dore's witticisms with an American accent that rang so true as to cause one to suspect her of being a Canadian at least, if not an actual niece of Uncle Sam! Mr. John H. Dickins at times rose to great heights of humour as the Earl of Marshmorton, but Miss Alice Lepper might have been more expressive as Lady Caroline, though she said her words with creditable clearness. Mr. Owen O'Donnell produced a very nice bit of characterisation as a stage-door keeper, and Mr. Edwin Fox managed his part wonderfully well. Miss Nancy Gardiner did not quite realise the subtle humour that lies in the part of Miss Mould, but she was good enough.

Of those inimitable two, Keggs and Albertina, scarcely enough of praise can be said. Mr. W. J. Lawrence Milne and Miss Elsie McKenzie portrayed these two exquisitely funny characters in practically a flawless manner. The smaller and super parts were excellently arranged and played, and there was every evidence of careful and skilful production, for which Mr. Sydney Murrey was responsible.

BANK OF ENGLAND D.S.

The Bank of England Dramatic Society have a reputation and they have certainly not detracted from it by their rendering of "Quality Street," at the Arts Theatre. Under the skilful direction of Rupert M. Heath and in the hands—and voices—of these obviously sympathetic players, the quaint charm and wistfulness of this beautiful play was well brought out. Despite one or two isolated unfortunate incidents, as when one character said "Come in" a good twenty seconds before the knock on the door and one awkward pause owing to forgetfulness, the general impression was of a high standard of acting.

Joyce White was a charming Phœbe Throssel and played the part with a delicacy not often to be found in amateur actresses. There never appeared to be the slightest straining after effect. We have also praise for T. S. Saunders, as the dashing Valentine Brown. His portrayal of the tender-hearted gallant Captain was well done and he swaggered delightfully in his accoutrements. Donia Scott, as the elder Miss Throssel, the humorous but would-be practical and withal loving Susan, gave a happy performance, and we enjoyed the work of Edna Smith as the good-hearted Patty and Harry Michell as Pupils of Miss Italia Conti appeared in the schoolroom scene and Freddie Springett, as Arthur Wellesley Tomson, deserves special mention.

BERKELEY PLAYERS.

The Berkeley Players, the name given to the dramatic section of the West London Synagogue, presented Sir James Barrie's "Dear Brutus" at the Garrick Theatre, in aid of the Middlesex Hospital and the Jewish Board of Guardians, for which fund several hundreds of pounds were realised by a splendid performance to a really fine house. The play was effectively produced by Sydney Murrey. Dorothy Drage brought out all the whimsical characteristics of Margaret, of which she gave a charming rendering. Norman Hart did some good character work as Lob and Sydney Drage was capital as Coadie. Eva Levy played well as the haughty Caroline, and Leo Genn gave a perfect portrayal as Dearth. Annette Steel, as Alice, Grace Joseph, as Joanna, Alma Rosenberger as Mrs. Coadie, Myra Doringer as Mabel, Geoffrey Salmon as Matey and Alan King-Hamilton as Purdie, completed a well-selected cast. The Lyric Theatre Orchestra, under the direction of Louis Rose,

OLD SUTTONIANS.

The Old Suttonians Dramatic and Operatic Society presented, at the local public hall, on December 4th and three following evenings, acceptable Gilbert and Sullivan fare. In "Cox and Box," Mr. J. Essam Lee (James John Cox) and Mr. Alan Hanson (John James Box) gave interesting performances. The latter's singing was especially appreciated. Mr. H. C. Best (Sergeant Bouncer) was an amusing figure. In "The Sorcerer," Mr. Ralph Wheeler (Alexis) and Miss Jean Broadley (Aline) made an ideal hero and heroine, acting and singing to excellent purpose. As Dr. Daly, Mr. Frank Everett scored an all-round success and Miss Dorothy Frewen, a charming Lady Sangazure, used her fine contralto voice effectively. Mr. J. Essam Lee played capitally in the difficult part of J. J. Wells, and as Mrs. Parlet, Miss Gertrude Nurse gave a good account of herself. As Constance, Miss Lilian Stevens, somewhat weak vocally, made full use of by-play. Mr. H. C. Best acted adequately as Sir Marmaduke Pointdextre and Mr. A. Harold interpreted humorously the Notary. Good support was given by the chorus and the orchestra, directed by Mr. R. V. Seddon. Mr. Thomas J. Lamb produced successfully.

CROYDON STAGERS.

The Croydon Stagers scored an all-round success with their performances of "The Geisha" at the Grand Theatre, Croydon, during the week commencing December 1st. Mr. George Wilton was the producer, and the evident care with which the play was presented testified to his good supervision. The orchestra, too, under Mr. Frank Mummery's direction, added also to the general enjoyment of the piece. Miss Beatrice Hampton's interpretation of O Mimosa San, both in acting and singing, stamped her as an artist of marked merit. Mr. Roy Powell made a pleasing Reginald Fairfax and sang his songs with easy expression. He had as his lieutenants a quartette of jovial "sailor boys" in Mr. Stanley Chapman, Mr. Rex King, Mr. Victor Woolston and Miss Kathleen Kerry. Mr. Frank Williams imparted a convincing touch to the portly Marquess Imari. He was supported capably by Mr. Howard Burchett (Ta Kemine), Wun-Hi, the Chinaman, gave Mr. Fred Manners chances to amuse of which he took advantage; Miss Evelyn Poole pleased with her merry and bright playing of Molly Seamore, and the French girl, Juliette (with a good accent), was assumed with credit by Miss Josie Croll. The rôle of Captain Katana enabled Mr. E. E. Money to sing his tenor numbers to the evident enjoyment of his listeners, and Miss Pat Moran played Lady Constance Wynne on accepted lines. The minor parts in a somewhat lengthy cast were well filled. Picturesque stage settings and good chorus work were added features.

THE FREE LANCES (NORWOOD).

The Free Lances Operatic Club (Norwood) presented "The Cabaret Girl" at the Stanley Hall, South Norwood, on December 4th. It was a good production, but the lady principals in this society do not score so well as the men. Mr. Sydney Herbert's orchestra did not play as well as we have heard them either. Mr. "Bill" Gracey is always an outstanding figure in these shows, and he scored heavily in this one. So did Mr. Percy Quick, as his partner in the music publishing firm. Mr. Eric Richens has a good light comedy style, and he sang, danced and acted excellently. Miss Mary Kempton forces her humour too much to make it very effective; this marred her performance as Little Ada. Miss Muriel Tucker was not well cast as Marilynn Morgan, but she danced in good style. Miss Marjorie Marriott was satisfactory as the private secretary. Mr. Ralph Bayne had a weird and wonderful make-up as Feloosi, the agent. Mr. Ernest L. Benn, Mr. George Wilton, Mr. Clifford Goodwin, Miss Winifred Mason, Miss Olive Shellard, Miss Gwen Swaab, Miss Lily Goodchild and Miss Agnes Garner played other parts. The chorus work was really good, and the stage production, too, by Mr. George W. Wilton.

OLD DUNSTONIANS' D.S.

The Old Dunstonians' Dramatic Society's presentation or Helen and Harvey Granville-Barker's English version of S. and J. Alvarez Quintera's three-act play, "A Hundred Years Old," on December 11th was an admirable one. Mr. Alan Birch is to be heartily congratulated on his production and most of the players on their good work. Every one seemed to get the spirit of the thing, and to create the required atmosphere. Mr. Colin Martin contributed a performance as Papa Juan that would have done no discredit to the professional stage. His make-up was excellent and his acting just right. We enjoyed, too, the Currita of Miss Avril Fitch, who played the rôle with rare distinction. She has a keen sense of character, and clear enunciation.

One of the weak spots in the performance was the Trino of Mr. Eric Kellaway. He was "jerky" and never for a moment made us believe in the part he was playing. Miss Myra Steven was not well cast as Eulalia either, but Miss Lily Rose played Dona Flomena very cleverly. Miss Maisie Stougnell did well as Dona Marciala and Mr. G. C. Clifford proved quite a success as Don Evaristo. In other parts, Mr. Bernard Stone, Miss Violet Adams, Miss Joan Kemp, Mr. B. W. F. Harvey and Mr. Ronald Pearce were quite satisfactory.

An interesting feature of the work of this society is that they construct all their own scenery and lighting effects.

(Other Amateur Notices on Page 3).

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Telegrams: VICMUSCO, WESTCENT, LONDON

By L. HENDERSON WILLIAMS.

PORTSMOUTH BACH CHOIR.

Mr. Hugh Burry is doing excellent work with the Portsmouth Bach Choir. At the Victoria and Albert Museum on Saturday afternoon, 13th inst., under the auspices of the League of Arts, the choir sang Bach's Christmas Oratorio in highly creditable fashion. It numbers about fifty (some members were absent through illness) and there was a small orchestra of s'. fiddles, two violas, 'cello and double bass. Miss Muriel Foster (piano *continuo*) had much to do and did it admirably. The solos were taken by members of the choir, Mr. Frederick Ranalow being indisposed. Diction and phrasing of the tenor were particularly good. Mr. Burry maintained discipline without show of effort. Attack was crisp and balance fair and the pitch in unaccompanied chorals was excellently kept. Especially successful were the choruses "Break forth, O beauteous heavenly light" and "Glory be to God in the Highest."

AMATEUR ORCHESTRA OF LONDON.

This orchestra seems to have increased its number of violins—perhaps inclining a little to overset the tonal balance and sometimes resulting in untidinesses in the matter of entries and exits. But since Mr. Wynne Reeves chooses always such unhackneyed programmes no doubt rehearsals are unusually attractive—and of course, an amateur orchestra has more liberty in such directions than a professional one. The double-basses did good work and the Society has reason to be proud of its chief oboist. The newest work performed in Kingsway Hall on Monday evening (15th) was Mr. Hely-Hutchinson's Symphony "The Carol." This is really more of a Free Fantasia than a symphony, based, mainly, on the well-known hymn "O, come all ye faithful." It was a very suitable choice in works for the season and shows considerable ingenuity in variation. The slow movement gave the harpist a chance to show her worth and the first and last tested the agility of the fiddles. The "Mastersingers" Overture made a good beginning for such a chilly night and Rossini's "*Die Italienerin in Algier*" and Caesar Franck's "*Le Chasseur Maudit*" provided plenty of variety in instrumental outlook. Miss Astra Desmond was in glorious voice and one appreciated greatly the purity of her tone in the seldom heard Handelian Aria "*Dank sei dir*" and the clearness of her diction in an English version of the *Habanera* from Bizet's *Carmen*.

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC CENTRE.

Owing to dis-arrangement of the programme at Armitage Hall, on Tuesday evening the 16th I was obliged to miss some of the really new works. Arnold Bax's rather long Viola Sonata started, played by Bernard Shore and Angus Morrison. Re-hearing confirmed the earlier good impressions of this sonata. It was very competently performed, but Miss Cohen's interpretation was warmer than Mr. Morrison's. Given that you accept the viola as an ideal consort for the voice, Norman Peterkin's three songs for that combination were cleverly conceived. There was character in the monotonous rhythm of "The journeyman weaver" and rhythm, too, was the making of "The piper." "A curse on a closed gate" seemed to me to need the potentially deeper bitterness of full harmony. The songs were admirably handled, vocally and dramatically, by Dorothy Moulton: few could have made the voice tell so well through the too approximate colour of a viola. Of the Three Pieces for Viola and Piano by Gordon Jacob I found the *Ostinato* most interesting in its working-out. The *Elegie* exhibited the viola at its best, and Messrs. Shore and Morrison did justice to all.

ORIANA MADRIGAL SOCIETY.

If ever a man fell upon his rightful job it is Mr. Charles Kennedy Scott in choir-training. He has now shaped the "Oriana" to a remarkable degree of plasticity. Test it how you will the part-singing is true, assured, well balanced; the rhythms well characterised, the tone always agreeable. Tuesday night's programme contained motets by Sweelinck and Palestrina, part of Bach's Christmas Oratorio, and carols of every variety. The first and last items—Sweelinck's "*Hodie*" and Vaughan Williams's "Wassail"—now as on former occasions were the Choir's peculiar triumphs. Vocal solos were given with good effect by Gladys Currie (soprano), Mary Morris (contralto), Percy Manchester (tenor) and Eric Whittemore (baritone). The tambour (Leonard Goodban) made unusual appearance as *obbligatist* in an arrangement by Arnold Bax of a delightful old Burgundian carol, and Messrs. Joseph Slater (flute) and Frederic Jackson (piano) assisted at all sorts of *ensembles* as well as contributing a sonata of Haydn's—the one with a particularly gay and attractive finale. Amongst the modern carol-writers who have completely assimilated the spirit of the earlier form are Martin Shaw and Vaughan Williams. Arnold Bax's stuff is interesting for its own sake, but too Bax to be period. Alec Rowley's "December Morn" was very pleasing in its own line and cleverly handled—an example of what is to medieval carols as Erasmus to Luther. But the stuff of which true carols were made has really petered out.

BEETHOVEN'S MASS IN D.

In Queen's Hall on Wednesday night, as one event in the chain of B.B.C. Symphony Concerts, Herr Hermann Scherchen directed the National Chorus and Orchestra in a wonderfully efficient performance of Beethoven's great Mass in D. My seat was too close to the platform to afford opportunity for a really critical estimate of the balance of the work where such numbers were involved, but I had a general impression that chorus and instrumentalists, particularly the former, came through with credit, though any finer shading in the orchestral scoring I, perforce, missed. The tone of the chorus was exceedingly bright, true (except in cases where it could hardly be expected such was the strain), and well balanced and the attack precise. Herr Scherchen's reading had, indeed, a marvellous precision, a sheer brilliancy of technical executancy rarely associated with choral work. The *fortes* were a blaze of sound; the *pianissimos* a shadow; the transitions highly dramatic. There was undoubted power and impressiveness in his concept but I missed the note of spirituality. Horace Stevens sounded it for a moment in the *Agnus Dei*, but for the rest of the quartet they seemed to be far too much concerned with notes to have any leisure for interpretation. May Busby has not the vocal experience or the æsthetic poise for this kind of music, for which rough and ready opera affords no training. It is hardly to be called her fault but rather that of whoever put her in a false position through choosing singers without proper regard to their individual qualifications. Muriel Brunskill and Parry Jones have, of course, the necessary experience. But neither of them were at their best on this occasion. After the immensity of noise produced by such a chorus in full cry, however well organised, the blessed serenity of the solo violin's introduction to the *Benedictus* (Arthur Catterall) was like dew-fall at the close of a torrid day. There was more devotional beauty in his playing than in any of the singing. There were occasional failures in the perfection of *ensemble*, noticeably the ragged entries of the instrumental *fugato* at the end of the *Agnus Dei*. But against that one must set the extraordinary slickness of other entries and exits. Professor Tovey's remarkably interesting note on the Mass would have been more illuminating in conjunction with a performance of less magnitude and more subtlety.

The playing of Haydn's Introduction to *The Creation* was as we expect from this orchestra and Herr Scherchen, here, did evoke an atmosphere of expectation and mystery. This music bears well being divorced from its context.

PETER WARLOCK.

English music has suffered an irreplaceable loss in the departure from this life, on December 17th, of Philip Heseltine, more widely known as Peter Warlock. He was only thirty-six, and though he had already built him a name in both music and literature there was every reason to suppose that he had not yet given us the full fruit of his harvest. Although he might be called a neo-Elizabethan composer, there was so much individuality in his use of the old forms that no one suspected him of putting on a period to arrest attention. He was at home in madrigalian or even earlier days. He belonged to a state of society not yet staled with the materiality of knowledge but pricked to creative effort by the innate mystery in life. In his songs, in his "Capriol" Suite, in his "Serenade" he expressed a classical delight in form but no dry imprisonment in it. He "took" the forms as naturally as a bud the mould of its Creator. And his arrangements of folk-tunes were remarkable for fidelity to, and understanding of, the period-idiom. As well as a composer he was a music critic of standing, and the Life of Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa, written in collaboration with Cecil Gray, shows how far he might also have been successful as a biographer.

Opera at Margate.

The Godwin Opera Company is to visit the Theatre Royal, Margate, for a short season of opera, commencing on Friday and extending over the following week. The programme will consist of "Maritana," "The Barber of Seville," "Il Trovatore," "Rigoletto," "Tales of Hoffman," "Tannhauser," "The Bohemian Girl," and "Carmen."

LONDON JUNIOR ORCHESTRA.

The fifth season of the London Junior Orchestra will begin with a concert at the Central Hall, on Thursday, January 8th, when the programme will include Beethoven's Symphony No. 1 in C.; Grieg, Pianoforte Concerto in A minor; Pomp and Circumstance March, No. 4; and the Vorspiel from Act 1 of Lohengrin. Soloists: Valetta Jacopi (contralto); Maurice Cole (pianoforte). The conductor is Mr. Ernest Read.

A most encouraging message has been received by the Society from the President, Sir Henry Wood, who writes: "For years I have been reminding people that there are other instruments than the Pianoforte in this musical world of ours, instruments which have a very decided advantage over the Pianoforte in that they are portable, can go almost everywhere with the player, even during his holidays. Moreover, as an orchestral musician of long standing, I know that boys and girls, and also older wives, maids and men, can secure a vast amount of intellectual and emotional pleasure by playing in an orchestra. Only those who have themselves had the experience know what a joy and a thrill it is to take part with twenty other violins, violas or 'cellos in a performance, or to be one of a whole body of wood-wind or brass players. Therefore your scheme for forming an orchestra largely from young people who have recently left school, was a brilliant one, and you are carrying it out splendidly. The fact that you have already gathered together more than a hundred and twenty players in the London Junior Orchestra speaks for itself.

"The gramophone and the wireless have opened people's ears wider than ever before to orchestral music, as is shown by the large audience who now flock to the Queen's Hall whenever a good orchestral programme is announced. Taste and enthusiasm have been created. Inevitably, some of the keenest listeners want to play as well as to hear. Their desire is entirely praiseworthy, and by satisfying it they can greatly extend their powers of comprehension and appreciation. But although it is never too late to take up an orchestral instrument, it was very difficult for the amateur player to obtain a place in an orchestra before you devoted your ability, experience and enthusiasm to getting your admirable scheme into working order.

"Many years ago I, and those who helped me, founded the Queen's Hall Promenade Concerts, which have awakened England's dormant love for orchestral music. It is a great desire of mine to see in every town in Great Britain an amateur orchestra directed by a competent conductor, and fostering this love for the great orchestral masterpieces by allowing amateurs to take part in performance, to make their own orchestral music. This should be an ideal pursued by young and old if we are to become a musical nation."

Jack Cottrell Composing.

Jack Cottrell, the author and composer, is now back again at 49, Poland-street, after a long period in revue, writing and composing songs and shows.

"CHELSEA FOLLIES."

AT THE VICTORIA PALACE.

A Neighbourhood Revue in two parts, by Archibald De Bear and Reginald Arkell. Music by Wolseley Charles. Presented by R. H. Gillespie and Archibald De Bear at the Victoria Palace on Wednesday, December 17th, 1930.

These "Chelsea Follies" are well-named. They have a distinctly local flavour, at one moment topical, at the next redolent of a faint nostalgia for the past, and so that the proceedings shall not become too pretty-pretty and precious there is a riotous comic element which freely sprinkles parody over them. In fact, there is something in this entertainment to please all tastes.

We are shown the Chelsea of to-day, perhaps the most pleasantly parochial of all districts in London, in a series of scenes by the river, at Stamford Bridge, and of the Flower Show which offered an opportunity for colourful display—thank goodness it was not overdone. Chelsea of the past was depicted in a scene in front of "Ye Bunne Shoppe," where we meet Nell Gwynne and King Charles, and learn how the Chelsea Hospital was founded, and in a clever sketch where Thomas Carlyle, from his statue, surveys the result of the emancipation of women, so strenuously advocated by him, and having looked, dives suicidally from his pedestal.

Jimmy Nervo and Teddy Knox are commanders-in-chief of the comic side of the show, and they are screamingly funny in a knock-about boxing match, a talking film with a sequel in slow motion (uncannily clever), as a schoolboy and his father, and perhaps, best of all, as circus artists, in which scene, incidentally, Eddie Gray as a ringmaster who seems to expect missiles from the audience, is comically effective.

Hal Swain and his Band supply the evening with a pleasant musical accompaniment, and excel themselves when given the opportunity in an interlude on their own. Naunton Wayne has the ideal compère's ingratiating and humorous manner, and he provided a real surprise during one of his appearances with some ingenious sleight-of-hand tricks. Mr. Hay Petrie and Mr. Harold Scott contribute clever character studies, Mr. Martin Iredale sings several numbers with a fine swagger, and is partnered decoratively in some delightful girl-and-music items by Miss Pearl Greene, Miss Peggy Cartwright and others. Miss Lillebil Ibsen gives some brilliantly-thought-out and cleverly-executed characterisations of French, Russian and Spanish singers. There is also a slightly cruel but devastatingly funny imitation of a minor star of the German light opera stage, and a parody of an English chorus girl. The Eight Lancashire Lads make several smart and rhythmical appearances. Altogether a very bright evening.

A copy of "THE ERA" can be obtained every Wednesday morning at any of Messrs. W. H. Smith and Sons' Bookstalls throughout the Kingdom.

Theatrical Gossip

"Aladdin" at the Dominion.

Splendid and spectacular as the Julian Wylie Dominion pantomime, "Aladdin," on Christmas Eve, promises to be, the splendour will not be allowed to outweigh the comedy. The names of two laughter-makers like Nellie Wallace and Lupino Lane in the cast guarantee that. Other principals are Ella Retford, Stella Browne, Wallace Lupino, Lilliane Gilbert, Griffiths Moss, Albert Darnley and Baby Love. The big scenes are the Blue Lacquer Palace of Aladdin, which vanishes into the desert, the Jewel Ballet and its curtain of diamonds, and the Curtain of living girls.

"The Song of the Drum."

With the arrival of Miss Helen Gilliland from America, the cast of "The Song of the Drum" is now complete but, unfortunately, Mr. Bobby Howes has been ill for a week and this has delayed rehearsals. Seeing that the production is on such a lavish scale and that there is no opportunity of presenting "The Song of the Drum" (as is done with most other musical plays) in the provinces for three or four weeks before it comes to London, Sir Alfred Butt is anxious to have at least three or four dress rehearsals. He has now, therefore, given up any idea of producing it before Christmas, but hopes to produce it before the end of the year.

The cast is as follows: Capt. Anthony Darrell, Derek Oldham; Colonel McKenna, George Bishop; Major Bonnington, Brian Gilmour; Chips Wilcox, Bobby Howes, Goofy Topham, Peter Haddon; "Babe," Arthur Macrea; "Tott," Leslie Coles; Major Kirkwood, Alan Stevenson; Firmani Khan Lasova, Cecil Musk; Danot Aru, Ivan Berlyn; Maneka, Gordon Crocker; Ilkhani of Kahlek, Allan Jeayes; Naib, an old native, Robert Woollard; Satbutt, Clifford Bullock; Sheila McKenna, Helen Gilliland; Judy, Clarice Hardwicke; Countess von Haultstein, Marie Burke; A Singer, Raymond Newell.

"Petticoat Influence."

As the St. Martin's Theatre, refurnished and redecorated, was not quite ready, the "Petticoat Influence" Company, which left the New Theatre to make way for "Charley's Aunt" on Saturday, has taken a holiday until the afternoon of Boxing Day, when the play opens at the St. Martin's. Miss Diana Wynyard is spending her holiday in South Devon, and while she is away her part of Peggy Chalfont will be played by Miss Jane Millican.

"Treasure Island."

The principal parts in "Treasure Island," which Miss Kyrle Bellew will revive at the Prince of Wales' on Boxing Day, for matinées only, are thus allotted:—

Long John Silver	Baliol Holloway
Blind Pew	Sydney Bland
Black Dog	Charles Groves
Ben Gunn	Charles Groves
Captain Smollett	Athol Fleming
Squire Trelawney	Robert Gates
Doctor Livesey	Ian Braested
George Merry	Harold Holland
Israel Hands	Neil Porter
Jim Hawkins	Harold Reese
Mrs. Hawkins	May Beamish

The play will be produced by Sydney Bland.

The matinées of "Treasure Island" will in no way interfere with the usual evening performances of "The Queen Bee."

"No. 17" at the Royalty.

On Boxing Day, at 2.30, Mr. Leon M. Lion will revive, at the Royalty, "No. 17," the "joyous melodrama" by J. Jefferson Farjeon, which ran for nine fonths when first produced in 1925 at Wyndham's Theatre, subsequently transferring to the New and Duke of York's Theatres. The cast is thus constituted:—

Gilbert Fordyce	Anthony Ireland
Eddie Scott	Ronald Simpson
Mr. Ackroyd	Leo Genn
Smith	Frank Royde
Mr. Brant	Marcus Barron
"Henry"	F. Ambrose Flower
Rose Ackroyd	Eileen Kelsey
Nora	Fabia Drake
Ben (of the Merchant Service)	Leon M. Lion

The play will be produced by Leon M. Lion.

Birmingham Repertory Season.

The second part of the winter season at Birmingham Repertory Theatre will see six plays performed, two of which will be given their first production. The first is the Phillpotts' comedy, "The Good Old Days," which opened this (Christmas) week, and the other new play is "The Harem," by Miss Dorothy Massingham. Other plays, all of which will be seen for the first time in the midlands, are "Twelve Thousand" (Bruno Frank), "The Macropulos" (Karel Capek), and "The Yellow Streak" (Mabel Adams Hope). Miss Massingham has been a member both of Sir Barry Jackson's Company and of the Stratford Festival Company. She took the part of the Queen in "Hamlet" when it was performed in modern dress at the Birmingham Theatre.

Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the Repertory Theatre is now to have three seasons instead of two: Christmas to Easter, a Spring season until the Summer vacation, and the Autumn season till Christmas. In addition to Mr. Owen Dale Roberts, newcomers to the Repertory are Mr. Carleton Hobbs, Mr. Edmund Tottenham, Mr. Fredk. Keen, Miss Mary Marvin and Mr. Philip Morant. Mr. Carleton Hobbs has played in town under Sir Barry Jackson, and toured South Africa with Miss Sybil Thorndike after the war.

"Blue Roses" for Town.

The new musical comedy sponsored by Laddie Cliff, "Blue Roses" (destined for London production shortly) has triumphantly concluded its opening week at Birmingham. It was played to big houses, and those who delight in dancing and amusing situations had more than their money's worth. There was only one interval, but with the deletion of one or two items the production can be reduced to reasonable limits. The mock shaving episode in a florist's shop is accompanied by a capital number entitled "Lathering"; the by-play is very cleverly planned. Not less amusing as burlesque is the robust demonstration of how to tie an evening dress tie by the same pair—George Clarke and Roy Royston, with Kenneth Kove as the victim once more. It is in real pantomime vein. "Double price for double chins" laconically announces George Clarke in the shaving affair, which is simply a ruse to get rid of Kenneth Kove as a private detective.

George Clarke's sleep-walking dance in outsize borrowed pyjamas must be seen to be relished. Again this is a ruse to prevent detection. Vera Bryer is a bright young thing, and Jean Colin sings charmingly and vamps Geo. Clarke with such laughable results that one almost chokes. But surely Miss Colin ought to wear a different dress in the last scene: it is too heavy and vaguely coloured compared with the flowing lines and soft but distinct tone of Vera Bryer's becoming frock. The changes of scene in the second and last act curtains allow dances to proceed. The duet, "If I Had Three Wishes" provides a theme for the score and should be popular.

"A Business Marriage."

A new play, entitled "A Business Marriage," will be presented at the Court Theatre on Boxing afternoon. Its author, who desires, for the moment, to remain anonymous, describes it as "An Improbability in Three Acts."

The Walter Martin Players.

Mr. Walter Martin and His Players, who have been appearing at the Leicester Royal Opera House on several occasions during the past few months, have done a great amount of good work in aid of charity, and a tribute to the generosity of the Walter Martin Players has been placed in one of the balconies of the Children's Hospital of the Leicester Royal Infirmary in the form of an inscribed tablet announcing that sums totalling £1,720 were raised by the Players from their efforts for the Hospital. They presented "Skin Deep" at the Opera House last week, which was well acted, and met with a capital reception.

Mystery Plays at the Players'.

The famous old Chester Pageant, "Noah's Deluge" and the Second Wakefield Nativity, "The Shepherd's Play," will be presented at the Players' Theatre Club, on Dec. 29th. Both plays will be accompanied by music specially written for this occasion by Mr. Jan Mertens. The production is in the hands of Ralph Neale. Between the plays there will be interludes of dance and mime by Jill Argyll.

"Noah's Deluge" gives the earliest account of woman's revolt against the domination of man. Noah's wife is the pioneer. She refuses to enter the ark. She tells Noah he can rave all day, but not one step will she move without her friends. Her sons appeal in vain. Finally, as the waters are rising round her, the sons pick her up and throw her aboard. The indignant wife tells Noah he has got the better of her this time, but "that for you" and slaps his face.

A Mimed Oratorio.

The Leeds Civic Playhouse made another successful venture in presenting Mendelssohn's "St. Paul" as a mimed oratorio at St. Aidan's Church, Leeds. Miss Edith Craig was responsible for the idea and her production of "St. Paul" was a unique and dramatic musical spectacle, revealing unusual beauty in the blending of tableaux, pageant and choral music. The oratorio tells the story of St. Paul, from the stoning of Stephen to Paul's miraculous conversion and his ultimate missionary work for the Christian Church. The miming actors worked under difficulties for at times the rhythm and pace of the vocalists had a tendency to slow down the action, especially in the case of the principals, but this in no way detracted from the merits of the actors, who were able to express themselves by gesture alone. The crowd scenes were strikingly effective, the most notable being the stoning of Stephen, in which the rhythmic action of the mob synchronised with the choral background with strong dramatic force. Of the many tableaux, none was more entrancingly beautiful and impressive than that depicting the visitation of the Angels to Paul on his way to Damascus—a triumph of lighting and stagecraft.

Dr. Bradley was the organist and a choir of two hundred voices, under the direction of Mr. H. N. Pickard, gave a notable performance, though at times their enunciation could have been better. Probably the large screen behind which they were hidden muffled the spoken word considerably. The four soloists, however, were clear in diction, and sang with much vigour and beauty of tone. Such an effective combination of oratorio and dramatic acting speaks volumes for the producing skill of Miss Edith Craig and the versatility of the Leeds Civic Playhouse, who added one more outstanding success to their already long list.

Josephine Trix as Principal Boy.

Miss Josephine Trix is making her first appearance as principal boy in pantomime this year at the Lewisham Hippodrome, where she will appear in "The Babes in the Wood." The Trix Sisters, Helen and Josephine, were first seen in "The League of Notions" at the Oxford Theatre eight years ago, and have stayed to play in this country off and on ever since. Their next big success was in "A to Z," which ran for a year.

Miss Helen Trix, who used to be at the piano, is at present in America, and to Josephine alone has been left the task of rescuing the babes in the wilds of Lewisham where, by the way, Mr. Jay Laurier will dispense the sunshine of his smile, and Messrs. Power and Bendon will complicate matters as the robbers.

Business at Dundee.

Despite great industrial depression, the year 1930 has been by no means a bad one for Dundee places of amusement; indeed, stage employment has been on a larger scale, thanks to the patriotic action of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Henderson in changing the Alhambra from pictures to stage performances. Grand opera; such musical shows as "No, No, Nanette"; comedies such as "The Patsy"; revues and variety, and panto. have made the new theatre a popular house.

The Hendersons' other theatre, the Queen's, has had another prosperous year of repertory, Patricia Graves, Florence Churchill, Criterion Company and Neville Graham each running successful seasons.

"THE MAID OF THE MOUNTAINS."

AT THE LONDON HIPPODROME.

Musical Play in three acts; book by Frederick Lonsdale; lyrics by Harry Graham; music by H. Fraser-Simson; additional numbers by Jas. W. Tate, R. P. Weston and Bert Lee; revived by Macdonald and Young at the London Hippodrome on Thursday, December 18th, 1930.

Carlo	Douglas Herald
Beppo	Bruce Carfax
Pietro	A. E. Johnson
Andrea	Bernard Dudley
Tonio	Jerry Verno
Teresa	Anne Croft
Baldasarre	Bertram Wallis
Angela	Nancy Fraser
Vittoria	Billie Hill
General Malona	Mark Lester
Crumpet	William Cromwell
Mayor of Santo	Ambrose Manning
Gianetti	Miriam Sabbage
Lieut. Rugini	John Oxford
Sergeant	A. E. Johnson

Producer ... Ernest Peirce

Separated only by a narrow thoroughfare from the theatre where it made its record run, "The Maid of the Mountains" came to the London Hippodrome on Thursday to win the hearts of a new generation of admirers. There were many among the audience who were renewing acquaintance with the famous opera, and to them it appealed with all its old charm. The piece has been brought up-to-date, for "making whoopee" and suchlike expressions were not familiar in the year 1917, when the piece was first given at Daly's and inaugurated a run of 1,352 performances.

There is no occasion to detail the story. The motif of jealousy, which causes Teresa to betray her faithless lover, Baldasarre, but which is compensated by their re-union in the end, is garnished throughout with sheer amusement. There is so much humour, in fact, that one rather regrets that Teresa's brooding grievance should keep her quite out of it. Almost her only light moments are when she attempts to wheedle General Malona into releasing Baldasarre from his prison on Devil's Isle. There is no occasion, either, to draw comparisons. But it may be observed that, whereas the Teresa of Jose Collins was individual and dramatic, Anne Croft's impersonation inclines rather to the lyrical and pensive, though she shows herself capable, when the moment calls, of passionate and powerful declamation. Her voice, too, has exquisite quality, and, in its high range, a tonal purity that could hardly be surpassed. She is just a different Teresa; and her rendering of the familiar numbers—familiar even to the younger generation—earned her several encores—a double one for the famous "Love will find a way," in which Miss Croft's top note quite electrified her hearers. Bertram Wallis is seen in his old part of Baldasarre, and makes a superb king of the brigands. His big acting moment is, of course, the scene of his betrayal, and he makes it very impressive.

Mark Lester is also available for his original part of General Malona, and his mellow humour was responsible for continuous laughter. He has new witticisms and whimsicalities which were unfailing. We had a new Tonio in Jerry Verno, whose ingenuous methods were employed with mirthful results, the encounters with Tonio's affectionate wife being particularly entertaining. One could scarcely imagine a more charming and clever Vittoria than Billie Hill. She is almost too charming for any man to have wished to get away from; and from her first entrance this accomplished comedienne maintained the fun of the part at a high level. Nancy Fraser has quite the right alluring personalty as Angela, and her acting throughout is delightfully graceful and effective. Bruce Carfax made a decided hit as Beppo. He has a powerful tenor voice, the beauties of which were displayed in the duet with Teresa, "A paradise for two," which had to be repeated. Appreciation must be added of the work of Douglas Herald as the sinister Carlo, of John Oxford's Lieutenant Rugini, and, in fact, of the high competence of the cast as a whole, which includes fine chorus work and dances arranged by Espinosa. Ernest Pierce is the producer and the orchestra is conducted with unerring skill by Ernest Irving.

"THE TOYMAKER OF NUREMBERG."

AT THE KINGSWAY.

A New Musical Play, based by Austin Strong and Adrian Ross on Austin Strong's play; lyrics by Adrian Ross; music by Dudley Glass; presented at the Kingsway Theatre on Saturday, December 20th, 1930.

The Maid	Vivienne Chatterton
The Handy Man	Leslie Holland
The Sentry	Dewey Gibson
The Boy	Lewis Shaw
The Sergeant	Arthur Stanley
The Poet	Lawrence Baskcomb
The Girl	Anne Bolt
The Toymaker	Frederick Ranalow
The Wife	Alex Frizell
The Employer	Roy Byford
The Lamplighter	Dewey Gibson
The Stranger	Alan Durai

Producer ... Stephen Thomas

Who at such a season of the year could possibly frown on this lushly sentimental hotchpotch with its passionless boy-and-girl love affair, ticking clocks with their musical chimes, and gaily coloured dolls which come to life and dance for our delight.

Our quarrel with it, of course, should be that it uses some first-class artists without giving them good enough material on which to exercise their talents. George Sheringham's scenery and costumes are delicious naturally; this original decorator can take any subject and invest it with delicate absurdity. But what are we to think of that robust actor and singer, Mr. Frederick Ranalow, being asked to waste his art on a part which sinks under its own weight of sweetness, of the nimble-witted Mr. Leslie Holland running about pointlessly as a comic servant, or of Miss Alex Frizell, that superb actress, trying to create a character out of nothing. Mr. Ranalow did not appear to be in as good voice as usual, perhaps he was oppressed by having to suggest such overwhelming goodness of heart; Mr. Holland did wonders in the circumstances; his "Song of the Broom" was quite the best thing of the evening; and Miss Frizell never for one moment ceased to suggest by her manner that here was the perfect part she had been waiting to play all her life.

Mr. Lewis Shaw was charmingly diffident and natural as the Boy in the love story, being in the character all the time. Miss Anne Bolt, as the Girl, was radiantly lovely; she danced beautifully, but her singing was inclined to be uneven. Messrs. Lawrence Baskcomb, Arthur Stanley and Roy Byford did their best with some unpromising comic situations, and Mr. Alan Durai invested the final moments of the evening with some gaiety of the cabaret order.

Mr. Adrian Ross's lyrics are neat and to the point. The music, with the exception of some interpolated Schumann, is trillsome and commonplace, and has none of the vigour of the jazz which it occasionally tries to parody.

"CINDERELLA."

AT THE GRAFTON.

An Edwardian version presented at the Grafton Theatre on Saturday, December 20th. Book by Peter Davey. Produced by Hal Walters.

Fairy	Thalia Fisher-White
Page	Margaret Pickard
Peggy Poudre	Jean Shepeard
Baroness Lackland	Geoffrey Dunn
Baron Lackland	Hal Walters
Cinderella	Helena Pickard
Dandini	Judith Wogan
Muriel	Elizabeth Ainsworth
Mopsa	Oliver Reynolds
Clivvy	Reginald Beckwith
'Erb	Alan Wheatley
Alf	Archie Harradine
Oldest Inhabitant	Archie Harradine
Broker's Assistant	Jack Craig
Cook	Betty Addison
Dressmaker	Freda Gay
Madame Celestine	Nancy Scott
Prince Paragon	Sybil Woodruffe

Those who appreciate a little light unsophisticated fare at Christmas and who have also an ear for the ditties of the last generation, should visit the Grafton—they will spend a pleasant evening. And if a few benighted moderns stroll in to scoff, it is to be hoped that they listen attentively to the Prologue spoken by the Good Fairy. The most serious criticism that could be made was that there was scarcely enough space for Pantomime. We seemed to be sitting right on top of the Harlequinade (indeed there was not overmuch room for Clown Joey & Co. to perform their antics in—someone crashed into the wings!). It was a bijou pantomime in a bijou theatre!

The old ditties did the trick—in fact they made the show what it was. "Just like the Ivy," "Let's all go down the Strand," "Waiting at the Church," "The Honeysuckle and the Bee," and "It looks to me like a big night to-night," were all popular, but when it came to "Lily of Lugana" the audience took it up without any prompting.

Geoffrey Dunn was a decided success as the Baroness Lackland—the old woman of the pantomime and stepmother to Cinderella. His long waning figure and grotesquely made-up face should ensure him a future as a Christmas "dame." He brought the house down with his song, "I want to be in Opera." Hal Walter contributed his fair share of the humour as the Baron, and the old "catches," "Must You" and "She cost me Seven and Sixpence" went down well.

Helena Pickard was a charming Cinderella and sang her numbers prettily and effectively. Once or twice the old-fashioned sentiment seemed to amuse the audience. Sybil Woodruffe was an excellent principal boy, and her Prince Paragon was one of the best performances. Incidentally, she scored the only encore with "Lily of Lugana." Elizabeth Ainsworth and Oliver Reynolds certainly were amusing as the repulsive sisters Muriel and Mopsa. Their rendering of "Why is the world so gay?" was a scream. Jean Shepheard made a very dainty Peggy Poudre, and Judith Wogan a bold, swaggering, saucy Dandini. Alan Wheatley and Archie Harradine were delightful in "Broken Men Are We." They also played in the Harlequinade with success, as did Hal Walter, Oliver Reynolds and Rosaline Patrick. The latter dances well, but she ought to lose that glassy smile. On the whole a bright little entertainment.

Editorial Announcement.

The next issue of "THE ERA" will inaugurate the paper's new policy and there will be an announcement of the line of important future developments. The Pantomime Number will contain 48 pages, and included will be a new section devoted to the Film Industry, with special articles by well-known writers and comprehensive summaries of the activities of the various film companies for 1931.

Next week's "ERA" will also contain notices of the pantomimes and Christmas plays produced throughout the country, as well as the usual features. It will be published on January 1.

Next week's "Era" 48 Pages

January 1st, Price 6d.

BRISTOL'S LITTLE THEATRE.

The seventh anniversary of Bristol's Little Theatre was celebrated on Wednesday, and at an interval in the performance, the Chairman of the Company, Mr. Gordon W. Boyd, addressed the audience and thanked them for their support.

In the course of his speech, he said: "Since our inception we have produced over 300 plays, many for the first time in Bristol, which would not have otherwise been seen here, and a very creditable number of new productions. We have enjoyed eulogies in the Press and other marks of appreciation from all parts of the country and also from abroad, and it is astounding this enterprise is not better-known and more-highly appreciated in the city of its birth. This theatre is maintained by a band of regular supporters whom, perhaps, I may be allowed to term the elect, and I am not grousing at you, for we value your support and are not very dissatisfied with the patronage we have received, especially this season, but if we could recruit a dependable increase in our audience of only ten per performance there are so many improvements we could make both in the auditorium and upon the stage. I would therefore appeal to the elect to appoint themselves ambassadors and advocates amongst their friends to consummate this ambition.

"As illustrating my contention that our theatre is not without honour in the outside theatrical world I can tell you that two distinguished dramatists have offered new plays of theirs for a first production on any stage, and both of these works will be found in our spring programme. One called "Buy a Broom," is from the pen of Mr. Eden Phillpotts, who is known the whole world over as the author of 'The Farmer's Wife' and 'Yellow Sands.' The other is 'The Mendip Mystery,' by Mr. Lynn Brook, founded on his novel by that name. It has a distinctly local interest, and the author has won high distinction for his stagecraft as, under another pen-name, he wrote 'Irene Wycherly' and 'At the Barn,' both of which have been produced here.

"Let me conclude once more on a note of gratitude and thanks. Best thanks to our managing director, Mr. Stanley Hill; to our producers, Mr. Hutton and Mr. Brooks; to our deputy producer, Mr. Mervyn Johns, and every one else fore and aft of the curtain, not forgetting those responsible for our settings for their united artistic and loyal endeavours to achieve success."

The Fortune Theatre.

The Fortune Theatre's forthcoming production will be performed in a draped setting which is being executed by Joe Daniels, Junr.

By order of mortgagees, the Fortune Theatre, Russell-street, Covent Garden, is to be offered at auction at an early date. Particulars and conditions of sale may be obtained of the auctioneers, Ellis and Sons, 31, Dover-street, London, W.1.

PANTOMIMES AT DUNDEE.

"JACK AND THE BEANSTALK."

ALHAMBRA. — Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Henderson, proprietors of this popular new theatre, present this Christmas their first venture in pantomime, and in Payne and Browne's "Jack and the Beanstalk" they have got a winner. Scenery and dresses are on a lavish scale, specially calling for notice in the former being "The Village of Delight," "The Giant's Retreat," "The Floral Garden," "Illuminated Beanstalk," and "Palace of Delight."

Ernie Payne, of "Signals" and "Splinters" fame, is outstanding as "Dolly Dimple," make up and actions being wonderful. We liked, too, the female impersonations of Carl Rayner ("Mother Hubbard") and Keith Rowland ("Tom, the Piper's Son"), both striking a novel note in pantomime. Bennie Browne is simply great as "Jack," not only can he sing a tuneful ditty and dance neatly, but he can on occasion, by really skilful acting, give the real nursery rhymes' touch. And with such a comedian as Arthur Thomas ("Simple Simon") any show would go well. Vocally, Kitty Payne ("Fairy") and Jack Blackburn ("Demon") predominate. The Three Sisters O'Rourke make a great success in a musical speciality, and The Dancing Mamzelles add a bright touch.

Songs are well chosen, and amongst others there are submitted "Watching My Dreams Go By," "Sunny Side of the Street," "Sittin' on a Rainbow," "When it's Springtime in the Rockies," "If I had a Girl Like You," "I Don't Mind Walking in the Rain," "Sunny Days," "Singing in the Bath-tub" and "Broken Hearted."

"BABES IN THE WOOD."

VICTORIA. — Progressive Productions present "The Babes in the Wood," and Gordon Inglis, who is responsible for production, book and special music, has every reason to be satisfied.

Humour predominates, that merry Scott, Tommy Morgan, leading the way, ably asisted by Alec Stewart and Jimmy McKinley. Gordon Inglis further displays his versatility by doubling the rôles of "Baron Hardup" and "Evil Spirit," and as if this is not enough, gives a fine account of himself as a baritone singer.

Gertie Stuart and Dot Kay, as "Robin Hood" and "Maid Marion" respectively, are successful in songs and dances. The "Bon Tons" make delightful "Babes" and introduce some smart dancing. Vera Rodgers does well vocally as the Fairy.

Les Solfus gives a clever acrobatic display, and the speciality dancing of The Plaza Girls is enjoyed.

Harry Barclay ably conducts.

The Habina Players.

Mr. Charles Cochran is presenting, at the Phœnix Theatre on December 29th, the Habina Players, members of the Moscow Hebrew Theatre. The artists do not speak Yiddish or Russian on the stage, but Hebrew, the oldest form of speech of their culture. Their repertory consists of "The Dybbuk," "The Golem," "Jacob's Dream," "The Deluge," "The Eternal Jew" and "As You Like It," all of which will be given during their London season.

COMPOSER'S TRAGIC DEATH.

A prominent figure in the musical world has disappeared through the death of Philip Heseltine, the well-known composer, who wrote under the name of "Peter Warlock." He was found dead in bed in a gas-filled room of his small basement flat in Tite-street, Chelsea, on Wednesday. The grand piano at which he used to sit for hours composing and trying over his songs was open. Manuscripts of new works littered the floor. The doors were locked and bolted on the inside.

Peter Warlock was a close friend of Frederick Delius, whose beautiful little work, "Cynara," was discovered by him. He published more than a hundred songs, some of the best known being "Captain Stratton's Fancy," "Yarmouth Fair," "Sweet and Twenty" and "My Own Country."

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LITTLE WHITE LIES
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LOVING YOU
WAITING FOR THAT THING CALLED HAPPINESS
ON THE SUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET
EXACTLY LIKE YOU
BENCH IN THE PARK
SONG OF THE DAWN
I LIKE TO DO THINGS FOR YOU
RO-RO-ROLLIN' ALONG
HAPPY FEET
SITTIN' ON A RAINBOW
MY LOVE AFFAIR
HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN
THE KING'S HORSES

VALSES

HORATIO NICHOLLS' GIPSY MELODY
MEET ME IN MY DREAMS TO-NIGHT
PRINCESS ELIZABETH
MOLLY
ROMANCE
SILV'RY MOON
LAZY LOU'SIANA MOON
WHEN I PASSED THE OLD CHURCH DOOR

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NEXT WEEK'S CALLS.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1930.

The Editor relies upon the good faith of managers and others, and cannot accept responsibility with regard to any inaccuracies or changes which may be made in the calls.

BILL MATTER FOR JAN. 19, 1931, NOW DUE.

BROADHEAD CIRCUIT.

ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE PAVILION DROME.—Variety Entertainments present "Great Stuff This Variety."
ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE PAVILION THEATRE.—Talkies.
BURY HIPPODROME.—Talkies.
ECCLES CROWN THEATRE.—Will Beanland presents "Babes in the Wood" Pantomime. Matinee Thursday and Saturday.
LIVERPOOL PAVILION THEATRE.—Gar Kiddie presents "Little Bo-Peep" Pantomime. Matinee Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.
MANCHESTER EMPRESS THEATRE.—Talkies
MANCHESTER HULME HIPPODROME.—Jazon and Montgomery present "Robinson Crusoe" Pantomime. Matinee Thursday and Saturday.
MANCHESTER JUNCTION THEATRE.—Talkies.
MANCHESTER KING'S THEATRE.—Mrs. Kimberley presents "Cinderella" Pantomime. Matinee Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.
MANCHESTER METROPOLE THEATRE.—Metropolitan Productions present "Mind Your Step" Revue.
MANCHESTER OSBORNE THEATRE.—W. D. Productions present "Let's Have Variety."
MANCHESTER QUEEN'S PARK HIPPODROME.—Talkies.
MORECAMBE WINTER GARDENS.—Pictures and Dancing
PRESTON KING'S PALACE THEATRE.—Talkies.
PRESTON ROYAL HIPPODROME.—Meteor Productions present "Beauty on Parade" Revue. Matinee Thursday.
SALFORD ROYAL HIPPODROME.—Thos. F. Convery presents "Vaudeville Voyage" Revue.
(For all above Monday Band Rehearsal 2 o'clock.)

COLLINS AND GLADWIN TOUR.

DEVONPORT ALHAMBRA THEATRE.—Talkies.
NORWICH THEATRE ROYAL.—"Dick Whittington."
SWINDON EMPIRE THEATRE.—"See You."
WINDSOR THEATRE ROYAL.—"Cinderella."

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CANTERBURY MUSIC HALL (reh. 10).—Week: "Masquerade." Terry's 10 Columbines, Rosa Pinkerton, Wolkowsky and Nadia, Bonetti Bros.
CLAPTON RINK (reh. 10.30).—Week: Sammy Shields, Joyce and Shields.
EAST HAM PREMIER (reh. 11).—Mon., Rudarni and Carlton, Harry Taft. Thurs. (reh. 11).—Mamie Soutter, Graham and Douglas.
FINSBURY PARK RINK (reh. 10).—Week: "Petals." Terry's 10 Girls, Thelma Dane Stevens, Barber and Orpwood.
LONDON NEW VICTORIA.—Week Ethel Hook, Three Cresso Bros.
LUTON PALACE (reh. 11).—Week: Camille Gillard, Astill and Fontaine.
MILE END EMPIRE (reh. 10).—Week: "Follies of 1890," Eight Folies Girls, Loranna, Kennedy and Aldie, Chas. Ellis, Marie Hillier, The Brooklyn Boys.
NEW CROSS KINEMA (reh. 11).—Week: Varney and Butt, Haydn and Nevard.
PECKHAM TOWER (reh. 10.30).—Week: Fyne and Harley, Cecille Bronson.
SHEPHERD'S BUSH PAVILION (reh. 11).—Week: Lillian Burgiss.
STRATFORD BROADWAY (reh. 10).—Week: "The Mounties." Nan Foster, Billy Shenton, Savoy Male Octette, Cabaret Four, Leslie Pierce, Capt. Permance's Bears.
STAMFORD HILL REGENT (reh. 11).—Week: Two Van De Pears, Mona Grey.
TOTTENHAM PALACE (reh. 11).—Week: Jaap Van Laren and Wilhelming, Three Happy Boys with Girvan Dundas.

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BOSCOMBE HIPPODROME (reh. 1.30) (Flat Pitch).—"The Town Show."
BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME (reh. 12) (Flat Pitch).—Tallulah Bankhead and Co., Flotsam and Jetsam, Teddy Brown, Gladdy Sewell, Bromley Carter, Syd Royce and Partner, Toni Fagan, Zero Nalda.
BRIGHTON HIPPODROME (reh. 12) (Flat Pitch).—Henry D. Adams, Clapham and Dwyer, Barbette, Gene Sheldon, Derickson and Brown, O'Gorman Bros., Rene and Godfrey, Geo. Betton, Three Royces.
HOLBORN EMPIRE (reh. 10) (Flat Pitch).—Hengler Bros., Julian Rose, Lily Morris, Ann Penn, Dorrie Dene, Wells, Mordecai and Taylor, Nina Doria, Max Miller, Flying Banvards, Russell Carr, Dekker and Pan.
LEEDS HIPPODROME (reh. 12) (Flat Pitch).—"That Paris Feeling."
LIVERPOOL HIPPODROME (reh. 11) (Flat Pitch).—"Victoria Vanities."
LONDON PALLADIUM (reh. 9) (Flat Pitch).—Layton and Johnstone, Will Hay, Helen Howell and Co., Odali Careno, Moeser Jose and Horse, Jack Barty, Norman Long, Harold Walden, Margie Clifton.
NEWCASTLE HIPPODROME (reh. 11) (Flat Pitch).—The Great Carmo's Big Circus (once nightly).
PENGE EMPIRE (reh. 12) (Flat Pitch).—"Dick Whittington."
PORTSMOUTH HIPPODROME (reh. 12) (Flat Pitch).—Chas. Higgins, George Dormonde, Laline and Betty, Bud Cordell, Flying Petleys, Haynes and Beck, Dan Bros. and Sherry, Gordon Freeman, Leon and Lucette.
SOUTHAMPTON HIPPODROME (reh. 12.30) (Flat Pitch).—The Lido Follies."
SOUTHEND HIPPODROME (reh. 12) (Flat Pitch).—"Pageant on Parade."
WOLVERHAMPTON HIPPODROME (reh. 12) (Flat Pitch).—"Sensations of 1931."

HOWARD AND WYNDHAM, LTD.

EDINBURGH KING'S (reh. 11).—Wylie-Tate Pantomime "Mother Goose."
EDINBURGH LYCEUM (reh. 11).—"Blue Roses."
GLASGOW KING'S (reh. 11).—D'Oyly Carte Opera Co.
GLASGOW ROYAL (reh. 11).—Howard and Wyndham's Pantomime "Goldilocks and the Three Bears."
LIVERPOOL COURT (reh. 11).—"The Love Race."
NEWCASTLE ROYAL (reh. 11).—Howard and Wyndham's Pantomime "The Sleeping Beauty."

KENNEDY'S THEATRES.

DUDLEY OPERA HOUSE (reh. 12).—Randill Production presents "On the Bounce."
PALAIS DE DANSE.—Maurice and His Revellers.
WEST BROMWICH THEATRE ROYAL (reh. 12).—Robert Bernand presents "Cheeky Face."

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ALDERSHOT HIPPODROME. — Harry Day's "Fine Feathers."
KINGSTON EMPIRE.—"Ernie's End."

LONDON SYNDICATE HALLS.

(See page 13.)

THE MACNAGHTEN VAUDEVILLE CIRCUIT.

BLACKBURN.—Tom Vernon presents "Cinderella."
BRADFORD.—Kemp and Freeman presents "Laugh, Hang It, Laugh."
CARLISLE.—Company as booked.
HALIFAX.—F. and G. Productions present "Tune In."
HUDDERSFIELD.—Anna Louis Trio, Raya Sisters and Dolinoff, Alf. Thomas, Harry Carlton Brown and White, Ernest Shannon, Francis Gerard and Part, and 14 Gretta Kids.
SOUTHAMPTON.—George Robey, Jack Mazer, Rosie Lloyd, Astor and Astoria, Ruby Sisters, Haig and Escoe, Three Chrichton Boys and Theda Sisters.
WARRINGTON.—Lew-Jay Enterprises presents "The Mirth Diggers."
At the Southampton Palace, Carlisle Palace, Blackburn Palace, orchestra Low Pitch, Reh. at all halls at 12.

MOSS' EMPIRES, LTD.

ABERDEEN H.M. (reh. 11).—Company as booked.
BIRMINGHAM EMPIRE (reh. 12.30) (Low Pitch).—Bostock's Royal Italian Circus.
BIRMINGHAM THEATRE ROYAL (reh. 11) (Low Pitch).—The Wylie-Tate Pantomome "The Sleeping Beauty." Cast includes G. S. Melvin, Dorothy Langley, and Betty Astell.
BLACKPOOL OPERA HOUSE (reh. 11) (Low Pitch).—Company as booked.
BRADFORD ALHAMBRA (reh. 12.15) (Low Pitch).—Francis Laidler presents "Mother Goose." Cast includes Norah Blaney and George Lacey.
CARDIFF EMPIRE (reh. 1) (Low Pitch).—"The Folies Bergere" Revue. Cast includes George Graves, and Marika Rokk.
EDINBURGH EMPIRE (reh. 11) (Low Pitch).—Jack Hylton and his Band, Holden's Mannikins, Short and Dalziel, George Durante, Leslie Sarony.
FINSBURY PARK EMPIRE (reh. 1) (Low Pitch).—Chefalo, Florence Smithson, Miller and Wilson, Jean Kennedy, Andy and Irving, Jack La Dair, Syd Roy's Rhythm Boys and Jean Rai.
GATESHEAD EMPIRE (reh. 1).—"The Denville Stock Company."
GLASGOW ALHAMBRA (reh. 11) (Low Pitch).—Jack Buchanan and Company in "Stand Up and Sing."
GLASGOW EMPIRE. Theatre closed for Re-building.
HANLEY GRAND THEATRE (reh. 12.30) (Low Pitch).—"Hello! Alfredo." Cast includes Alfredo and his Band.
HULL PALACE (reh. 1) (Low Pitch).—"The Jazz Parade. Cast includes Lucan and McShane, and Eric Randolph.
LEEDS EMPIRE (reh. 1) (Low Pitch).—Albert Sandler and Co., Wee Georgie Wood, The Two Florenz, The Three Where Bros, Cyril Shields, Stainless Stephen, The Dennis Duo, The Ando Family.
LEEDS THEATRE ROYAL (reh. 11) (Low Pitch).—Francis Laidler's Pantomime "Jack and The Beanstalk." Cast includes Cora Goffin and Toni Payne.
LIVERPOOL EMPIRE (reh. 1) (Low Pitch).—The Wylie-Tate Pantomime "Robinson Crusoe." Cast includes Dorothy Ward, and Shaun Glenville.
LONDON HIPPRODROME (reh. 11) (Low Pitch).—Moss' Empires, Ltd., present Herbert Clayton and Robert Macdonald's Production (by arrangement with British Amalgamated Theatres, Ltd.) "The Maid of the Mountains."
MANCHESTER PALACE THEATRE (reh. 11) (Low Pitch).—The Wylie-Tate Pantomime "Dick Whittington." Cast includes Fay Compton, Jack Edge, and Tom D. Newell.
NEWCASTLE EMPIRE (reh. 1) (Low Pitch).—"Silver Wings." Cast includes Harry Welchman. (2nd week).
NEW CROSS EMPIRE (reh. 1) (Low Pitch).—"Fancy Free." cast includes Talbot O'Farrell, Neil Neilson, The Four Julians.
NEWPORT EMPIRE (reh. 12) (Low Pitch).—"Blackberries." Cast includes Eddie Emerson, Big Boy Taylor, and Ike Hatch and his Symphony Steppers.
NOTTINGHAM EMPIRE (reh. 1) (Low Pitch).—"Midnight Madness." Cast includes Edwin Lawrence, and Harry Shalson.
NOTTINGHAM THEATRE ROYAL (reh. 12) (Low Pitch).—Francis Laidler's Pantomime "Aladdin." Cast includes Winnie Collins, and Dan Leno, junr.
PORTSMOUTH THEATRE ROYAL (reh. 11).—Leon Salberg's Pantomime "Jack and The Beanstalk."
SHEFFIELD EMPIRE (reh. 11) (Low Pitch).—Francis Laidler's Pantomime "Cinderella." Cast includes Reg. Bolton.
SOUTHAMPTON EMPIRE (reh. 1) (Low Pitch).—Archie Pitt presents "This Week of Grace." Cast includes Gracie Fields, "Auntie," The Blue Slavonic Co., Laurel Brothers, The Pitt Girls, The Prontos, Al Marshall, Fields and Rossini, Jock McKay.
SOUTHSEA KING'S THEATRE (reh. 1.30).—Lee Ephraim presents "Rio Rita."
SOUTH SHIELDS EMPIRE (reh. 1).—"The Revue Shop."
SOUTH SHIELDS THEATRE ROYAL (reh. 1).—"The Denville Stock Company."
STRATFORD EMPIRE (reh. 1) (Low Pitch).—"Why Go To Paris?" cast includes Queenie May, and Jack Gallagher.
SUNDERLAND EMPIRE (reh. 11) (Low Pitch).—T. F. Convery's Pantomime "Cinderella."
SUNDERLAND THEATRE ROYAL (reh. 1).—"Looking at Life."
SWANSEA EMPIRE (reh. 2) (Low Pitch).—"Tout Paris." Cast inculdes Frank O'Brian.
VICTORIA PALACE (reh. 11.30).—R. H. Gillespie presents Archibald de Bear's "Chelsea Follies."
WEST HARTLEPOOL EMPIRE (reh. 11).—"Casino de Paris."

STOLL TOUR.

(See page 13.)

MISCELLANEOUS.

ASTON HIPPODROME (reh. 12).—"Wide Awake."
AYR GAIETY (reh. 1) (Flat Pitch).—Dinkie Denton Trio, Florence Oldham, John Olivere and Louis Holt, Johnnie Walker and his Mascot, Annette Keith and her Boy Friends, Billy Rey and Partner, Arthur Lewis and Mamie Lauri, Bert Denver and Harry Niblock, Tommy Dale.
BATH PALACE (reh. 1).—Tom Davies Trio, Dalton Sisters, Paul Freeman, Mitzuko, Stroll and Steward, Bob Lloyd and Betty Hill, Revill and Syd.
BLACKPOOL OPERA HOUSE.—"The Squall."
BLACKPOOL PALACE OF VARIETIES.—"Hello Folks."
COVENTRY HIPPODROME (reh. 12).—Robb Wilton and Variety, as booked.
ISLINGTON CARLTON (reh. Mon. 11).—Pantomime. "Cinderella."
KEIGHLEY HIPPODROME (reh. 11.30) (Low Pitch).—Jack Tully's Pantomime, "Cinderella."
POPLAR QUEEN'S (reh. 4).—"Playthings."
SHEFFIELD HIPPODROME (reh. 12).—"Variety" Co. as booked.
UPTON PARK CARLTON (reh. Mon. 11).—Bert Errol and Betty, Norman Carroll, Petrie and Lister.

(*Continued from next column.*)

analysis that we are doing less than justice to the contents of the show itself. Well, the Harlequinade and the old Italian comedy are the excellent bases on which it is founded. Young and old will enjoy every word of it. Poor old Pantaloon is always a figure of fun and, when you have got him on a string, the possibilities are obviously unlimited! Congratulations to the Gair Wilkinson family, including the composer son.

GAIR WILKINSON PUPPETS.

It was with considerable interest that we made our way down to the Queen's Gate Hall (near South Kensington Station) to see the Gair Wilkinson Puppets at the West End. Could they possibly live up to the splendid reports we had heard about them? Would we have to admit that usual slight disappointment? No! To change the old Latin tag—"we came, we saw, they conquered"—consider us as additions to the Gair Wilkinson "fans" henceforth!

This, of course, may sound like mere rhetoric—so it may be as well to examine the factors which distinguish these puppets from all others we have seen. Are they on a particularly elaborate scale? No! Is their actual technique any better than many we have seen? Here again the answer must, we fancy, be no. The technique is excellent: the little figures fight duels, dance, prove themselves "one-bottle" men, and so forth, in the most elegant and natural style—but this is not the pre-eminent charm of the show.

No—the secret of this charm is probably to be found in a certain troubador who has a pleasant little way of coming in front of the miniature stage and salting the *va et vient* of the puppets with song and philosophy. Yes—on mature consideration—it is that philosophy which does the trick! And the troubador looks such a nice figure, too, in his velvet coat and with his guitar (we almost said "lute") in his hand. How the children will adore him!

We have got so excited about this

(*Continued in preceding column*).

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IMPERIAL LEAGUE OF OPERA.

STATEMENT FROM SIR THOMAS BEECHAM.

On behalf of the various committees representing the mmebers of the Imperial League of Opera in London and the provincial cities, Sir Thomas Beecham sends us the following manifesto:—

"In the early summer of 1929, just before the General Election, I was asked to meet the Prime Minister of the present Government for the purpose of discussing the whole question of national opera. Mr. MacDonald declared himself both willing and able, in the event of the Labour Party being returned to power, to provide a subsidy to the extent of £50,000 per annum, and directed many enquiries to me respecting the membership and resources of the League. I gave him an assurance that the League could and would provide an amount equal to the above-mentioned sum, and this offer was confirmed by an influential supporter, fully acquainted with our position, who was also present at the interview. At the same time, I pointed out that this contribution of ours had been obtained from voluntary subscriptions and donations, and it was highly probable that if the Government subsidy involved further taxation, the subscribers of the League might reasonably object to paying twice for the same object. Indeed, it was for the very purpose of laying the burden of supporting opera upon the backs of the willing and not of the unwilling, that the League had been founded. Mr. MacDonald replied that there would be no question of further taxation and that the Government would have at its disposal a fund for dealing with the matter in another way.

Government Subsidy Memorandum.

"In pursuance of this I attended a meeting the following November at the House of Commons at which there were present two Cabinet Ministers. The proposed Government subsidy was discussed at great length, and it was decided that there should be drawn up and forwarded to the Prime Minister, a Memorandum which would take the form of a report upon the conditions under which national opera had been founded and was being carried on in some of the leading foreign capitals. In February of the present year, I was informed by the Cabinet Minister who had undertaken the task of preparing the memorandum, that it was now complete save for a few details he required from me, and that it was about to be dispatched forthwith to the Prime Minister. I was further informed that the memorandum contained the recommendation that the Government, in the matter of the proposed subsidy, should deal with the League of Opera and that no other operatic organisation was therein mentioned. This partiality did not at the time nor does it now seem to me unreasonable. After all, the League does represent unquestionably the best amateur and professional opinion of the country. Included in its membership, in addition to all the leaders of music and heads of colleges and academies, are hundreds of the most prominent figures in the political, the social, the commercial and the artistic worlds. Lastly, it is the largest musical organisation hitherto created in the history of music. It was very soon after this that my negotiations with the Covent Garden Syndicate (begun in January) took a serious turn. I informed the representative of the Syndicate of my dealings with the Government, and made it clear that in the event of any amalgamation between us, the proposed Government subsidy should be given to the joint undertaking. I heard nothing further until the following June, when I was told that the Government intended to proceed no further with the scheme of national opera. I considered the matter closed, and continued to think so until the middle of November last when, through the public Press, I received the first intimation that the Government proposed to grant a subsidy of smaller amount and different character, to the Covent Garden Syndicate alone.

"So much for the Government.

"Shortly after the formation of the League (November, 1927), a member of its business committee approached the British Broadcasting Corporation with a view to obtaining a contract for future performances similar to that made recently with the Covent Garden Opera Syndicate. This negotiation was continued by me in May, 1928, and during the subsequent twelve months I was in regular and personal touch with responsible officials of the Corporation. Upon each occasion I was given to understand that although the Corporation was unable to enter into a formal contract with the League until it began to function as a performing institution, I could look forward none the less to the broadcasting of our opera performances when these should take place. I have never received any intimation from the Broadcasting Corporation to the contrary effect. The Corporation, as well as the Government, was generally acquainted with the character and the resources of the League.

The Principle of Amalgamation.

"The public has already been apprised of the negotiations between the League and the Covent Garden Syndicate, and I propose to add nothing to the statements issued by the Chairman and the Managing Director of that organisation. Further, it is my desire to refrain from making any observation that might be construed as criticism of the conduct of such negotiations. From the beginning, I have been an advocate of the principle of amalgamation, and I am still of the opinion that the right sort of amalgamation with any other organisation of power and independence is all to the good. But is there such an organisation other than the League now left? For by independence I mean the all important privilege of being master in one's own house. Last October, the League was distinctly under the impression that it was entering into an amalgamation with the Covent Garden Syndicate formed in 1927, an autonomous and (presumably) self-sufficient group of private persons. But within the last few weeks this Syndicate has been replaced by another (the Covent Garden Opera Syndicate, Ltd., 1930), and between the old and the new bodies there are the most striking and material dissimilarities. For on December 1st last, the Postmaster General stated that five-sixths of its resources are being furnished by the Government and the British Broadcasting Corporation, and that the B.B.C. is to be the conduit pipe through which the Government subsidy of £17,500 a year is to be paid to the new Syndicate. Add to this the further admission of the Postmaster General on December 8th that the B.B.C. would have a majority shareholding in the Syndicate and it becomes clear that the new body is in reality, if not in name, the British Broadcasting Corporation Opera Company. As for Covent Garden—*Stat nominis umbra.*

The League to be Incorporated.

"In short, the League began, and virtually completed, its negotiations with one set of contracting parties, and, before the final signing of the agreement, finds itself confronted with an entirely fresh combination of interests. Under these circumstances, the League is taking the only straightforward and dignified course open to it, which is to wipe the slate clean of the traces of all negotiations prior to the November publications on the part of the Government and the British Broadcasting Corporation, and to start all over again. At the same time, the League considers that before any negotiations are renewed, it should be in a stronger position to handle them. For that purpose, it proposes to incorporate itself into a company (without share capital and limited by guarantee) with a governing council, on which will be represented all the diverse interests that go to constitute it. This council will then be able to speak with one voice on behalf of the entire organisation, and will have the power either to enter into the kind of amalgamation it wants, or to maintain complete independence as a performing institution. This will be accomplished within the next two or three weeks."

(*Continued from next column*).

exhilarating dances, a skipping rope, and an acrobatic dance being particularly smart.

The ballets, staged by Miss Rosie Russon, were a delight to the eye. The scenery, fresh and beautiful, introduces two especially brilliant examples of the scene-painters' art, "A Dream of Beauty," in which clever use was made of the accessories to a lady's toilet, and "Gooseland" in which white and gold colours were shown with striking effect.

Mr. A. Douglas Willcox directed the orchestra with his customary ability. The curtain fell to enthusiastic applause, and Mr. Harry Gordon gave expression of the thanks of the company for their hearty reception.

"MOTHER GOOSE."

AT KING'S, EDINBURGH.

"Mother Goose," the second pantomime here under the able supervision of Mr. Julian Wylie, was produced at the King's Theatre, on Monday, 15th December, before an audience that crowded the house from pit to gallery.

The book by Mr. J. Hickory Wood contains a slender plot which is cleverly developed. Mother Goose is raised from poverty to affluence by a wandering fowl which comes into her garden, and which has the fortunate gift of laying golden eggs. Priscilla, for that is the name of the goose, brings gladness to the home of Mother Goose, but that jolly old lady, in her endeavours to acquire beauty, delivers herself into the hands of the Demon Discordo, and it is only through the influence of the Fairy Heartsease that matters are righted again, and the members of Mother Goose's family are happy and prosperous once more.

Mr. A. Stewart Cruikshank, the enterprising Managing Director of the King's, has been exceedingly fortunate in the band of players whom he has gathered together. Jill, the principal girl, Miss Molly Fisher, is a very charming actress who displays unbounded vivacity in her impersonation of the part, sings with expression, and dances with much grace. Robbie, her favoured suitor, is played by Miss Nita Croft, who makes a handsome, dashing lover. Miss Croft is a cultured vocalist, whose songs are rendered effectively, and she had ample evidence, in the applause which greeted her efforts, that she appealed, with success, to the good opinion of the audience.

The central figure of Mother Goose is in the hands of Mr. Harry Gordon, a comedian of humour and resource. Mr. Gordon never failed, by his droll patter and comical business in giving the necessary brightness to the part. His song, "Where is my wandering boy to-day," was a big success. Mr. Archie Glen, as Jack, is another whimsical actor, who proved a most witty helper in raising laughter. He is a pleasant comedian, with a quiet style whose jokes are always full of point. Miss Betty Humel, as Maise, is a dainty little comedienne, whose sprightly acting, and jocular method make her part an outstanding one. Her burlesque of a prima donna, and a farcical dance were hailed with laughter, and enthusiastic applause.

Mr. Joe Arthur, a wonderful animal impersonator, is the Golden Goose. He showed not only all the characteristics of the bird he represented, but, despite the make-up, he touched the audience into stillness by his pathetic acting in the scene where he parted with his mistress, and the applause loud and prolonged—was a tribute to his power. Mr. Jack Holden, as Squire Longacres, gave a capital impersonation, and Mr. St John Medley was a fearsome Demon Discordo. Miss Ethel Alderson was delightful as Fairy Heartsease, while her clear diction was a pleasure to hear. The Brothers Ross were amusing as the horse, and others who contributed to the entertainment were Mr. Fred Watt, as Viscount Discount; and Miss Doris Rogers, as the Duchess. The Winstanley Girls provided several

(*Continued in preceding column*).

"JANE'S LEGACY."

AT THE DUCHESS THEATRE.

Produced on December 16th.

Ivy Mortimore ..... Viola Lyel
Jack Mortimore ..... Frank Moore
Sergeant Merryweather Chugg ..... Frank Pettingell
John Ford ..... Colin Keith-Johnston
Ned Thorn ..... Paul Kelston
Mrs. Susan Thorn ..... Barbara Gott
Emmeline Coode ..... Lesley Cox
Jane Mortimore ..... Louise Hampton
Tom Sparrow ..... Henry Caine
Samuel ..... Herbert Lugg
Daisy Ford ..... Kathleen Harrison
Rupert Sparrow ..... Norman Claridge
The Rev. Philip Ryle...Stanley Newman
The 'and of Providence...Dorothy Hall

Producer ..... H. K. Ayliff

Poor Jane Mortimore! Little did she forsee the upheaval, the farrago of bickerings, heart-burnings, and scheming amongst friends and relations that were to follow when she heard of her thousand pound legacy. "You think what you're going to do with money," she declared later, "but you never think what it's going to do with you!" And until the "'and of Providence" turns up in the person of an elderly lady (also named Jane Mortimore) Jane whose family had hitherto known only "comfortable poverty" as they describe it, encounters more trouble than she had known in the whole of her previous life.

A strong plot is never a feature of a Phillpotts' play, indeed it is not an essential, and that of "Jane's Legacy" is slender enough in all conscience. Nevertheless there is much to counterbalance that deficiency. The shafts of wit the epigrams—or Phillpottisms—the brilliant pictures of rustic character all help the author to "get away with" an unpretentious story. But even these would have fallen short without the support of Mr. Barry Jackson's admirably selected company which provided as true an example of shrewd casting as could be seen in any London production. To Miss Louise Hampton must be accorded the highest praise. That her finished artistry is at last receiving the acknowledgment it has long earned is a matter for gratification, and her performance of Jane, moving and life-like every moment of it, was one of the finest pieces of character work she has done. As the two rivals for the hand of Jane's sister, Mr. Colin Keith-Johnston and Mr. Henry Caine made an interesting contrast. The former's study of rural pigheadedness allied with the country bumpkin's swagger, stood out well against the more sophisticated nature of the other. Mr. Frank Pettingell created a humorously bumptious rogue in Sergeant Chugg, and a characteristically comic piece of work on the part of Miss Barbara Gott was another outstanding feature, whilst delightful character studies were provided by Miss Dorothy Hall, Miss Viola Lyel and Mr. Frank Moore.

Al Marshall for West End.

Al Marshall, the clever little eccentric dancer with the Alfred Lester expression, has been engaged by Chas. Cochran for his next London Pavilion revue.

"FULL HOUSE."

AT THE FACULTY OF ARTS THEATRE.

Produced on December 16th.

Sir Julius Constantine, K.C..... Mr. Charles Staite
Anne ..... Miss Helen Gosse
Derek ..... Mr. Michael Shepley
Peter ..... Mr. Hugh Dempster
June ..... Miss Molly Rankin
Ruby Gimble ..... Miss Marjorie Clayton

Producer: Mr. John V. Trevor.

"I'm sorry it's all so antediluvian," remarks the young wife in the new three-act play, "Full House," by Anthony Armstrong, produced at the Faculty of Arts Theatre on the 16th instant, for six performances. She was apologising to one of her guests for the accommodation of her gas-lit seaside bungalow, but it was difficult not to apply the criticism in one's mind to the plot of the play. For, bright and amusing as it is, one could not help wondering why a writer capable of such neat dialogue and clever lines, should waste his skill over that well-worn theme, the "bedroom farce."

Peter and June invite Derek and Anne, a couple of "bright young things" whose engagement has been recently broken off, down to their bungalow, which has a sitting room, a bedroom and a kitchen *hors de combat* through flooding. Two improvised beds in the sitting room, with a screen in between, apparently form the best solution when it comes to the problem of fixing everybody up for the night, and as these, by dint of a little scheming on the part of Anne, are allotted to her and Derek, the usual comic situations that arise from such positions (on the stage) are given full play. There are further complications introduced. A pretty housemaid from a neighbouring bungalow seeks shelter and, taking advantage of one of the times when the mattress bed is unoccupied, settles down there for the rest of the night; some mock-blackmail, and so on. It is all quite good fun and perfectly harmless, moreover, it was adequately played by all the small cast, and particularly by the two principals, who entered thoroughly into the spirit of it all. Hugh Dempster and Molly Rankin, as the young married couple and Michael Shepley and Helen Gosse as the two guests were throughout so charmingly entertaining as almost to disarm criticism, and as a distracted young woman with explosive moments and a humorously pompous K.C., Marjorie Clayton and Charles Staite provided comic interludes. The play was excellently produced by John V. Trevor.

Repertory at Ramsgate.

Councillor L. A. F. Weigall and the Entertainments Manager (Mr. Rupert J. Costerton), have been empowered by the Sands and Entertainments Committee, of Ramsgate Town Council, to arrange for the letting of the West Cliff Concert Hall to the H.W. Wieland Agency for the production of repertory plays for a period, from December 26th, at a rental to be agreed.

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1930.

THE THEATRE IN 1930.

THE past dramatic year, while it has been devoid of any particularly epoch-making events, is notable as being the first one for a long time to give us any definite hints of the lines on which the theatre of the future is likely to develop. The age of confusion engendered in the first instance by the war seems at last to be passing away. Two years ago the English theatre looked like reverting to normal conditions, but the talking pictures then came along and threw it into a fresh spasm of pessimistic conjecture. But now that the "talkies" have become, not the dangerous rivals they were first believed to be, but wealthy and enterprising co-operators who are putting large sums of money into the pockets of actors and playwrights, it is possible to take stock of the present situation and from it deduce the prospects of the future.

Successes of the Year.

The first thing which strikes us in reviewing the theatrical activities of the past year, is their extraordinary scope and diversity. And it is this, we venture to think, which ensures the survival of the theatre. Talking pictures are expensive undertakings, and if they are to pay their way, must appeal to the largest possible public. This of course is a limitation which does not apply equally to the theatre, where the wants of the eclectic can be supplied expensively or, if need be, with the aid of a handful of actors and some curtains.

We find that the most successful ventures in the theatre have been those in which novelty and personality have played important parts. Of the successes of the previous year, "The First Mrs. Fraser," with its attractive combination of two distinctive and popular players, Miss Marie Tempest and Mr. Henry Ainley, and "Bitter Sweet," which struck a fresh note in musical plays, both continued their triumphant runs. Outstanding attractions among the newer plays have been "On the Spot," Mr. Edgar Wallace's daring and affrighting exposition of gang warfare in Chicago; "Cynara," which again gives us a popular acting partnership in that of Sir Gerald du Maurier and Miss Gladys Cooper; "The Man in Possession," Captain Harwood's sophisticated comedy at the Ambassadors; and Mr. Neil Grant's less shocking, though no less amusing "Petticoat Influence."

The old order of song-and-dance shows seems definitely to have faded away. Mr. Lee Ephraim's two offerings, "Heads Up" and "Rio Rita," which would have been successes a few years ago, both failed unmistakably. The new style of musical play has not yet been found, for this year we have had no triumphs in the same class with "Bitter Sweet." The biggest success has been scored by the Gaiety management, following up their past policy with the production of "The Love Race." "Silver Wings," "The Three Musketeers" and "Sons o' Guns" all succeeded only moderately, and even that measure was attained not because of their intrinsic merits, but because of the appearance in them of artists with a big drawing power. Perhaps Mr. Cochran has shown us the future evolution of the musical play with his lately produced "Evergreen," staged after the style of his famous revues.

IT was a pity that the early summer months were characterised by an unaccountable slump, for then playgoers were presented with some very interesting attractions. Messrs. Cochran and Maurice Browne's International Season at the Globe gave us the German actor Moissi, the Pitoëffs from Paris, and the striking Japanese players; while Mr. Browne brought to the Queen's Theatre from the Old Vic the Hamlet of Mr. John Gielgud, acclaimed as one of the greatest pieces of acting of this generation.

New Era of Liveliness.

Of the West-End autumn productions, "The Barretts of Wimpole-street" and "Street Scenes" and "The Breadwinner" are the most intelligent and—hopeful sign—among the big financial successes. A long and prosperous series of farces looks like having been inaugurated at the Strand with "It's a Boy," and other light and popular pieces are "Leave it to Psmith," "Oh Daddy" and "Marry the Girl." There have been several unfortunate and perhaps undeserved failures, but by general appearances the theatre has been shaken by past difficulties and misfortunes into a new era of liveliness and exploration. There should be a number of promising developments in the New Year.

INTERVIEW.

NATURALNESS ON THE STAGE.

A TALK WITH MISS MARDA VANNE.

People who go to see E. M. Delafield's first play, "To See Ourselves," at the Ambassadors, will come away from the theatre feeling they have seen a slice of real life. They will probably think that all the playwright had to do was to make notes of the conversations and actions of people she knew, and the actors merely had to go on and be natural. But is it really as easy as all that?

The truth of the matter is that to depict naturalism on the stage requires one of the most advanced forms of dramatic technique, the most complete artifice. Miss Marda Vanne, who plays the part of the wife whose outstanding quality is that of ordinariness, made this quite clear to me when I discussed the question with her the other afternoon.

"I have a theory," she said, "that there is no such thing as reality on the stage. Framed within the proscenium and the footlights, you have a magical area where anything real immediately destroys illusion. Put a real rabbit or goat on the stage, and there is an end of the peculiar atmosphere which the author and players have been building up. Sir Herbert Tree sometimes used to forget this; he would try to get realism by introducing real things. And of course he got exactly the opposite effect of what he wanted.

Artistic Devices.

"We are told that 'To See Ourselves' gives audiences the impression of unswerving reality to life. But that is only because Miss Delafield has built it up out of a thousand minute details which in themselves are purely artistic devices. Take that supper scene, for instance. What a dreary meal it is for those on the stage, and how they are flattened out by poor Freddie's talkativeness. The audience has to be made aware of the prevailing boredom, and at the same time be entertained by it. The author has to take them up to those Olympian heights from which, we have heard, the gods look down as interested spectators of the brave and pathetic little struggles of human beings. In other words, they have to be taken right out of themselves to see themselves."

Confidence in a Play.

"Did you like the play from the first?"

"Major Vernon sent for me. I went to his house and he put the script in my hand, telling me to go into the dining-room and read one act. Once I got started on it, nothing would tear me away from the play. I read it to the end and told Major Vernon he had a winner. When we were rehearsing it, I think I can say now, Mr. Hannen and I were not quite so sure. It seemed so short, so delicate, and we wondered whether the public would like it after all. But I have noticed that this often happens during rehearsals. You begin with a play full of confidence and hope, then gradually it seems to be slipping away. By the time of the dress rehearsal it often appears to have walked right out of the theatre. The only thing to do is to wait for it to reappear, as it usually does, with the first night audience. When the first laugh came in the first few moments of 'To See Ourselves,' we knew that we were all right.

"It's a funny thing about laughs. Of course, you can tell more or less where the big ones are going to occur, but you never know which of the lesser things are going to amuse the audience. This play, as it turns out, runs to a continual ripple of delighted amusement."

A High Comedy Part.

"Your part is a hard-working one isn't it?"

"Yes, it is not one of those parts where you occasionally get left out of things and can take a rest while still on the stage. I have to be 'there' all the time. I always try to keep something in reserve, and don't try to play for huge yells, especially at the beginning. There is such a thing as making your audience laugh themselves out in the first act, so that they will be quite unmoved by funny things later on. I try not to stress the farcical side. It would be so easy to do that in the bedroom scene, for instance. But this play is high comedy, not farce."

"Did you see much of Miss Delafield at rehearsals?"

"Luckily a great deal, for she was so helpful. She is one of the most

[Photo: Yvonne Gregory.
MISS MARDA VANNE.

charming people I have ever met, with a delightful sense of irony, and she was invariably so right with her suggestions."

Fascination of the First Play.

"What first attracted you to the stage?" I asked Miss Vanne, feeling that it would be interesting to draw her out of her present play for a moment."

"The answer to that question is just too frightfully ordinary: my first play. At the age of five I was taken by my nanny to the theatre, and at the end I screamed and yelled until they allowed me to walk on the stage. From that moment I never had any other dream or wish than to be an actress. I first studied for the stage in America. About the time of the Armistice I came to England. I believe now that it is wrong to move your ground early in your career. Make up your mind first of all where you want to work, be it London, New York or Paris, and *stay* there; get known. An actress who goes to America to-day, even to a good job, runs the risk of quickly being forgotten here. There are always others to step into her shoes. It's all right for stars of international repute to go visiting, but an actress who is building up a career must sit tight."

Ambitious About the Theatre.

"What does the theatre mean to you?"

"I'm afraid I'm quite serious about the theatre; sometimes I wish I were not. What I want to do in my work is to speak the truth as I know it; not to give a bravura performance and sacrifice a dramatist to my own personal applause, but to make people, through my efforts, feel that they have experienced a phase of life. Does this all sound terribly earnest and pretentious? But you see, I'm ambitious." R. C.

THE STAGE GUILD.

ARTISTS' SECTION.

Mr. H. A. Saintsbury presided at the Council meeting held on Tuesday, the 16th, and the following were also present: Messrs. Lawrence J. Lawrence, Charles Clifford, Oswald Lingard, Henry Hallatt, Clarence Blakiston, Ernest E. Norris, F. Joynsen-Powell, Charles R. Stone, Frank Irish, Val Gully, Robert Cunningham, Cecil King, Frank Lacy, Lauderdale Beckett, Misses Christine Silver, Eva Moore, Lydia Donovan, Helen Ferrers, Elsie Shelton, Gracie Vicat and Madge Brindley.

New Members.

Brefni O'Rorke, H. Howell Davies, A. Brandon Cremer, Laura Tully, Leo McCabe, Anthony John and George Gregory were elected to membership.

Contracts.

A case in dispute where a member claimed for an amount on an engagement has been settled to the satisfaction of the member through the mediation of the Guild.

Ministry of Labour.

The Guild were invited to nominate a representative to be appointed as their representative on the Workpeople's Panel of the Local Employment Committee in connection with the Great Marlborough-street Employment Exchange. Council have nominated the General Secretary to serve on this Committee, and he has been cordially accepted as a member of the Committee. Council hope that the representation of the artists on this Committee will be of service to members of the profession.

Holiday Arrangements.

The Guild offices will be open during the holidays from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. for members and managers who wish to make engagements. The General Secretary's Office will be open on December 27th from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m.

"THE ERA" 90 YEARS AGO.

SADLER'S WELLS.

This theatre, long famed for the production of pantomimes, has lost none of its energies in the preparation of its Christmas annual for the present season, it has fairly outstripped most of its contemporaries this year, and fully equalled the rest. The novelty of last night is called *Harlequin and "Poor Richard"; or Old Father Time and the Almanac Maker.* It is written by Mr. Younge, the facetious inventor of so many of these winter garlands; the opening is excellent; the comic business extremely funny; the scenery, by Cuthbert and Fenton, well designed and beautifully executed; and the costumes and appointments are fanciful and appropriate. . . . The comic business consists of hits at Cardigan's Black Bottle, the Royal Cheese, Prince Albert's Own Regiment, Musard's Concert, Railway Murders, Temperance Societies, War with China, and the last scene, the Hall of History, painted by Cuthbert, illustrating Britain's various triumphs from the time of Alfred, and ending with a tableau of the young Princess and Albert and Victoria is very effective. The Pantomime is carefully produced in every respect; the outlay upon it has been most lavish, and it will, doubtless, have a long and profitable run.

Reprinted from "The Era," December 27th, 1840.

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

E.A. (Withington, Manchester).—*The tour has apparently been suspended during the pantomime season. Write to us again towards the end of January, when we hope to be able to give you the information desired.*

Evelyn Laye as Godmother.

Evelyn Laye was looking as charming and composed as ever when, as the guest of honour at a luncheon at the Savoy by Hartley's, Ltd., she christened the new "Bitter-Sweet" marmalade. Miss Laye carried out the function with humour and *aplomb*, and if her expression as she tasted the preserve was a true indication of its goodness, it should enjoy enormous popularity. Unfortunately she had to leave early to perform at the Winter Distress League matinée at the Cambridge Theatre, which was attended by the Duchess of York.

* * *

Royal Interest in Sadler's Wells.

John Gielgud also took part in this charity matinée, playing as Hotspur with Miss Dorothy Green in a scene from "Henry IV." He told me that when, with the other artists, he was presented to the Duchess at the end of the performance, she spoke to him with great interest about the opening next month of Sadler's Wells Theatre with "Twelfth Night," in which Gielgud is to play Malvolio.

* * *

Noël's Farewell.

On Saturday night, Noël Coward gave a big farewell party to his friends in his new studio home, before sailing shortly after Christmas to play in "Private Lives" in New York. As in London, the piece will be limited there to a three-months' run, but that does not mean that we shall see him home again in the spring. I should not be surprised to hear of he is becoming a temporary resident in Hollywood, for the films have always fascinated him, although he has confessed that they are a difficult medium for him to work in.

* * *

Canine Duettist.

When I met Stella Browne, who is to play the principal girl in "Aladdin" at the Dominion to-morrow night, I was struck by her charming unaffectedness. It was at a tea and cocktail party and she was asked to sing. Graciously she complied with an aria from "Traviata," but no sooner had she opened her mouth than her Alsatian dog woke up and obliged with a canine accompaniment. Did Miss Browne indulge in a temperamental display? She did not, but burst out laughing while the dog was led from the room. She told me afterwards that she is to sing both "good" and popular music in "Aladdin," her repertoire including "I wonder if it's really love," "Telling it to the daisies" and "Lo, here the gentle lark." Another striking piece of news she gave me was that Nellie Wallace in the show has a sixteen-stone male understudy called Mr. Brownbill.

* * *

An All-Night Party.

Joan Barry had the happy Inspiration of celebrating Christmas and the hundredth performance of "The Barretts of Wimpole Street" by giving, in Grosvenor-square the other night, one of the most amusing and successful parties of the season. It started at about six in the evening with cocktails and dancing and ended in the late hours of the following morning with breakfast—and dancing. The hostess had to leave to go to her work at the Queen's Theatre, and returned after the play to find the guests she left reinforced by a large number of newcomers. I was struck by the enormous preponderance of blondes among our actresses. At the party there was Joan Barry herself, Mary Newcomb, who told me that her next appearance will be in a "talkie," Heather Thatcher, with monocle of course, and Renee Gadd, who gives such a delightful touch of sincerity and sentiment to the last scene of the daringly cynical "Queen Bee."

* * *

Stage and Film Work.

Joan Barry told me that she will play Isobel Elsom's part in the "talkie" version of "The Outsider." This will mean that, like Cedric Hardwicke, who shortly commences work in the title rôle of the film "Dreyfus," she will be working in the studio all day, and at the Queen's Theatre at night.

* * *

A Way to Get Thin.

When I asked Baliol Holloway if he found rehearsing the one-legged part of Long John Silver in "Treasure Island" gave him aches and pains, he replied that he was so used to discomfort on the stage that the painful process of making himself appear to have only one leg was comparatively easy work for him. "My worst experience," he said, "was in 1921 at the Stratford Festival during the memorable heat wave of that year. 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' was constantly in the bill, and I played Falstaff padded out with horse-hair fourteen inches thick. I lost two stone in six weeks." It struck me that this might form the basis of a novel and effective slimming course.

* * *

An Actress's Return.

Kyrle Bellew, who is presenting "Treasure Island" at the Prince of Wales's, says that this will be her last managerial venture for some time to come. She has definitely decided to return to the stage early next year in a new comedy with a strong emotional interest. Her last appearance as an actress was in 1925, when she was seen with the late Arthur Bourchier at a revival of "The Thief" at the Strand Theatre.

* * *

The Rôle of Cook.

Barbara Gott has a servant problem all her own. In her last three "talkies" she has played the part of a cook. Perhaps this is another instance of casting to type, since Miss Gott's favourite hobby is cooking. "Even Anglo-Indians praise my curries," is her proud boast. Just now, of course, Barbara Gott is giving a highly comical performance as a domineering matron in "Jane's Legacy," Eden Phillpotts's latest comedy at the Duchess.

"The Flying Fool" Film.

This clever character-actress tells me she is playing her original part in the talkie version of "The Flying Fool." Henry Kendall, who surprised all who only knew him as an actor of cheerfully superficial rôles by his exceedingly subtle performance as the ruthless murderer in "A Murder Has Been Arranged," is also playing his original part in "The Flying Fool" in the film of the play. I am delighted to hear incidentally that Emlyn Williams's thriller is doing the fine business it deserves at the St. James's.

* * *

Curtain-Raising Impersonations.

"To See Ourselves" was perhaps a little on the short side for those people who like their theatrical fare in liberal helpings. Now, I hear, Elizabeth Pollock's impersonations, which are so well known to listeners-in, have been added as a curtain-raiser. Miss Pollock, I have noticed, invariably chooses the most difficult subjects to parody. Her impressions of Gladys Cooper, Edna Best, and Edith Evans I consider gems of satirical observation. Herbert Farjeon, I am told, writes all her material for her. It was in his revue, "Many Happy Returns," that Miss Pollock first appeared in public as an impersonator.

* * *

Quick Work.

One has to admire Leon M. Lion's energy and initiative in tackling what for a theatre-manager must be one of the most difficult situations. Less than a fortnight before Christmas he realised that he had a failure with "A Marriage Has Been Dis-Arranged" at the Royalty. Should he attempt to run it over Christmas, or put on a new attraction? At 9.30 on the Saturday night he decided to withdraw Leonard Ide's play at once, and an hour later was busy with the telephone casting a revival of "No. 17," one of his biggest past successes. By an odd coincidence, the title of the play, if inverted, spells Lion.

* * *

A Fair "Maid."

After the first night of "The Maid of the Mountains," I went round to congratulate Annie Croft on her delightful performance. It was clever of her, I think, to re-create the part of Teresa after her own idea, and make the heroine a blonde gipsy instead of the tempestuous dark beauty José Collins gave us. I hear that this revival may be transferred to a large popular-priced theatre at the end of its eight weeks' tenancy of the Hippodrome.

* * *

New Hippodrome Star.

The next leading lady at the Hippodrome will be Anna Neagle, a pretty fair-haired girl whom Jack Buchanan picked out of the chorus to play opposite him in "Stand Up and Sing." Like many of our musical comedy actresses, Anna Neagle started her career in Charlot's chorus. She was also at the Pavilion in several of Mr. Cochran's productions, and went with one of them to America. On her return she changed her name from Marjorie Robertson to her present one, and determined to go in for film work. This she did, playing a leading part with Matheson Lang in "The Chinese Bungalow."

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

DEC. 23rd.—"A Pair of Trousers," Criterion; "The Land of the Christmas Stocking," Everyman; Children's Theatre reopens.
DEC. 24th.—"Aladdin," Dominion; "Carpet Slippers," Embassy; "Lavender," Prince's, Manchester.
DEC. 26th.—"The Windmill Man," Scala; "Petticoat Influence" (transfer), St. Martin's; "Treasure Island" (matinées only), Prince of Wales's; "Robinson Crusoe," Lyceum; "No. 17," Royalty; Aladdin," Empire, Chiswick; "Dick Whittington," Brixton; "Dick Whittington," Grand, Croydon; "Aladdin," Richmond Theatre; "Cinderella," King's, Hammersmith.
DEC. 29th.—"A Christmas Carol" and "A Pantomime Rehearsal," Fortune; Habima Players in "The Dybbuk," Phoenix.
JAN. 5th.—"Twelfth Night," Sadler's Wells.
JAN. 8th.—"Folly to be Wise," Piccadilly.
JAN. 12th.—"The Rising Generation" (revival), Embassy.
JAN. 27th.—"Precious Bane," Embassy.
DEC. 28th.—Italian Marionette Players, Arts.

"THE SONG OF THE DRUM."

(*To the Editor of "The Era"*).

SIR,—With regard to the forthcoming production of "The Song of the Drum," may I be allowed, merely as a matter of record, to mention that a one-act play of mine, "The Drum," containing a poem, entitled "The Song of the Drum," was produced at the Savoy in March, 1912, and subsequently published in book form.—Yours, etc.,

MARK E. PERUGINI.
C/o The Institute of Journalists,
Tudor-street, E.C.4
December 18th, 1930.

Fay Compton Studio.

The end of term found the students of the Fay Compton Studio of Dramatic Art very busy for the last six afternoons, giving performances of the work studied during the session. Among the performances of very considerable merit, particular mention must be made of "Trial by Jury," given by the whole of the Comprehensive Training Course students, and scenes from "Hobson's Choice."

Two features make the session notable. They are, the very high percentage of male students who joined during the term, and the erection in the big hall of a very beautiful draped stage and front curtain. A lighting set will be added before the next session in January begins. Besides parents and friends, several well-known theatrical people witnessed the performances, among them Miss Fay Compton, naturally not an uninterested spectator.

ON THE ROAD.

NO CHARGE IS MADE FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS UNDER THIS HEADING. MANAGERS OF TOURING PLAYS, REVUES AND CONCERT PARTIES ARE INVITED TO FURNISH PARTICULARS OF THEIR TOURS FOR INSERTION.

PLAYS.

ABIE'S IRISH ROSE.—Dec. 22, T.R., Barrow.
ALF'S BUTTON (Repolished).—Dec. 22, Hippo., Aldershot.
BABES IN THE WOOD (Inglis).—Dec. 22, Met., Glasgow
BABES IN THE WOOD (Dooley).—Dec. 22, Hippo., Preston.
BLUE ROSES.—Dec. 22, Lyceum, Edinburgh.
CHARLEY'S AUNT.—Dec. 22, Palace, Watford.
CINDERELLA.—Dec. 22, T.R., Windsor.
CINDERELLA (Kimberley).—Dec. 22, Hippo., Hulme.
CINDERELLA (Convery).—Dec. 22, Empire, Sunderland.
CINDERELLA (Tully).—Dec. 22, Empire, York; 29, Hippo., Keighley.
CINDERELLA (Stephenson).—Dec. 22, Met., Bootle.
CINDERELLA (Bliss).—Dec. 22, Palace, South London.
CINDERELLA (Reynolds).—Dec. 29, T.R., Blackburn.
COUNTRY LIFE.—Dec. 22, T.R., Chatham.
DAPHNE.—Dec. 26, P.G., Folkestone.
DENTON-THOMPSON REP.—Dec. 22, Perth.
DESERT SONG (C).—Dec. 26, T.R., Dewsbury (3).
DICK WHITTINGTON.—Dec. 22, T.R., Norwich.
DICK WHITTINGTON (Melrose).—Dec. 22, South Parade Pier, Southsea.
DOBELL, W. L.—Dec. 22, Town Hall, Dundalk.
D'OYLY CARTE.—Dec. 22 and 29, King's, Glasgow.
FREDERICA.—Dec. 26, P.O.W., Birmingham.
GIRL FRIEND (Macdonald & Young).—Dec. 24, St. George's, Kendal; 29, H.M., Carlisle.
GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS (Robson & Paling).—Dec. 22, Palace, Chelsea.
GOLDILOCKS (Dodd).—Dec. 22, T.R., Rochdale.
HERE COMES THE BRIDE (Macdonald & Young).—Dec. 24 and 29, Grand, Wolverhampton.
I'LL LEAVE IT TO YOU.—Dec. 22, Pavilion, Perth.
JACK AND JILL (Hart).—Dec. 24, T.R., Stockport.
JACK AND THE BEANSTALK (Sutton).—Dec. 26, O.H., Scarborough.
JACK AND THE BEANSTALK (Jason and Montgomery).—Dec. 22, Palace, Carlisle
JACK AND THE BEANSTALK (Salberg).—Dec. 22, T.R., Portsmouth.
JOURNEY'S END.—Dec. 29, Pavilion, Perth.
LAVENDER.—Dec. 24, Prince's, Manchester.
LITTLE BO-PEEP (Kiddie).—Dec. 22, Pav., Liverpool.
LITTLE MISS MUFFETT (Lees).—Dec. 22, Gaiety, Ayr.
LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD (Baldwick & Williams).—Dec. 22, Palace, Walthamstow.
LOVE LIES (Macdonald & Young).—Dec. 24 and 29, Prince's, Bradford.
LOVE RACE.—Dec. 22, Court, Liverpool.
MR. CINDERS.—Dec. 22, O.H., Blackpool.
MY WIFE'S FAMILY.—Dec. 22 and 29, T.R., Sheffield.
NAUGHTY WIFE.—Dec. 22, Col., Whitby.
OTHER MEN'S WIVES (Pittard).—Dec. 22, Palace, Salisbury.
RED RIDING HOOD (Forde).—Dec. 22, Palace, Blackpool.
RED RIDING HOOD (Reynolds).—Dec. 29, T.R., Halifax.
RED RIDING HOOD (Loman).—Dec. 26, Grand, Bolton.
ROBINSON CRUSOE (Jazon & Montgomery).—Dec. 22, Osborne, Manchester.
ROBINSON CRUSOE (Ballard).—Dec. 22, H.M., Aberdeen.
RIO RITA.—Dec. 22, King's, Southsea.
ROBINSON CRUSOE (Holmshaw).—Dec. 26, Granville, Walham Green.
SECOND CHANCE.—Dec. 22, T.R., Leicester.
SILVER WINGS (Macdonald & Young).—Dec. 24 and 29, T.R., Brighton.
SILVER WINGS.—Dec. 22, Empire, Newcastle.
SINBAD THE SAILOR (Le Cren).—Dec. 26, New, Crewe.
SINBAD THE SAILOR (Collins).—Dec. 22, T.R., Edinburgh.
SO THIS IS LOVE.—Dec. 26, O.H., Buxton.
STAND UP AND SING.—Dec. 22, Alhambra, Glasgow.
SUNSHINE SALLY.—Dec. 22, Palace, Bradford.
THIRD TIME LUCKY.—Dec. 22, Grand, Southampton; 29, Hippo., Darlington.
WARM CORNER (Blue).—Dec. 22, Sheffield.

RESIDENT COMPANIES.

ACE PLAYERS.—Hippo., Margate.
ALBERT HALL REPERTORY.—Stafford.
DENVILLE STOCK.—R., Portsmouth; Emp., Gateshead; R. South Shields; Hippo., Huddersfield; T.R., Sunderland; Majestic, Newcastle.
DEWSBURY REP. PLAYERS.—R., Dewsbury.
EMBASSY REP.—Embassy, Swiss Cottage.
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REVUES.

ALL RIGHT ON THE WESTERN FRONT.—Dec. 22, Hippo., Liverpool.
BEAUTY ON PARADE.—Dec. 22, Hippo., Bristol.
CASINO DE PARIS.—Dec. 22, Pavilion, Glasgow.
CHEEKY FACE.—Dec. 22, Empire, Swindon.
COMEDY KING.—Dec. 26, New Northampton.
COUNCIL HOUSES.—Dec. 22, Empire, South Shields.
ERNIE'S END.—Dec. 29, Empire, Kingston.
EVENTS OF 1930.—Dec. 22, Rotunda, Liverpool.
FANCY FREE.—Dec. 22, Empire, Finsbury Park.
FAST LIFE.—Dec. 22, Empire, Woolwich.
FINE FEATHERS.—Dec. 29, Hippo., Aldershot.
FOLIES BERGERE.—Dec. 22, Empire, Cardiff.
GYPSY VAGABOND.—Dec. 22, Empire,
HAPPY DAYS.—Dec. 22, Palace, Reading.
HAMMER AND TONGS.—Dec. 22, Phoenix, Sheffield.
HELLO FOLKS.—Dec. 22, Empire, Stratford.
HOTTER THAN PARIS.—Dec. 22, Kings, Dover.
JAZZ PARADE.—Dec. 22, Empire, Birmingham.
LAST COUPON.—Dec. 22, T.R., Sunderland.
LAUGH, HANG IT, LAUGH.—Dec. 22, Palace, Halifax.
LAUGH PARADE—Dec. 22, Palace, Warrington.
LIDO FOLLIES.—Dec. 22, Empire, Nottingham.
LOVE LIARS.—Dec. 22, T.R., North Shields.
MAD HATTERS.—Dec. 22, Alex., Stoke Newington.
MAKING WHOOPEE.—Dec. 22, Empire, Kingston
MICKEY MOUSE.—Dec. 22, Queen's, Poplar.
MIDNIGHT MADNESS.—Dec. 22, Hippo., Leeds.
MIND YOUR STEP.—Dec. 22, Crown, Eccles.
MILITARY PICKLE.—Dec. 22, Bedford, Camden Town.
MIRTH DIGGERS.—Dec. 22, Pal., Huddersfield.
NUIT EXCITANTE.—Dec. 22, Hippo., Birmingham.
ONE OF THE BEST.—Dec. 22, Col., Kettering.
PARIS AND PICCADILLY.—Dec. 22, Metropolitan, W.
PLAYGIRLS OF PARIS.—Dec. 22, Hippo., Wolverhampton.
PLAYTHINGS.—Dec. 29, Queen's, Poplar.
REVE PARISIAN.—Dec. 22, Grand, Hanley.
REVUE SHOP.—Dec. 22, Empire, W. Hartlepool.
SALAD BOWL.—Dec. 24, W.G., New Brighton.
SENSATIONS.—Dec. 22, Hippo., Southend.
SEZ YOU.—Dec. 22, Hippo., Aston; 29, Empire, Swindon.
SENSATIONS OF 1931.—Dec. 29, Hippo., Wolverhampton.
SHOW'S THE THING.—Dec. 22, Palace, East Ham.
SNAP SHOTS.—Dec. 22, Hippo., Wigan.
STEP INSIDE.—Dec. 22, Palace, Southampton.
SUNSHINE SALLY.—Dec. 22, Palace, Bradford.
THAT PARIS FEELING.—Dec. 22, Palace, Hull.
TINY TOWN FOLLIES.—Dec. 22, Empress, Brixton.
TOUT PARIS.—Dec. 22, Empire, New Cross.
TUNE IN.—Dec. 22, Pal., Blackburn.
WHY GO TO PARIS?—Dec. 22, Hippo., Boscombe.
WIDE AWAKE.—Dec. 22, Hippo., Coventry; 29, Hippo., Aston.

RADIO DRAMA AND MUSIC.

National (261 and 1,554 metres).

On Wednesday, at 8.30 p.m., a carol service, in which members of the Wireless Choir and the Wireless Military Band, under the direction of Stanford Robinson, will take part, will be relayed from St. Mary's, Whitechapel. On the same evening, at 9.20 p.m., John Barbirolli will conduct a string orchestral concert, with Joan Coxon, who will sing Recit, "Me, when the Sun begins to sling," and Aria, "Hide me from Day's garish Eye," from Il Penseroso (Handel).

Ernest Longstaffe's radio pantomime, "Little Red Riding Hood," will be broadcast at 7.30 p.m. on Christmas Day. The artists will be as follow:—Cyril Nash, Alma Vane, Horace Percival, Leonard Henry, Michael Shaw, Philip Wade, Florence Marks, Lilian Keyes, and Jessie Tandy, the pantomime chorus and the Orchestra conducted by Ernest Longstaffe.

A vaudeville programme on Boxing Day at 7.30 p.m. will include: Bobbie Comber; Paul England in the first golf skit of a golfing programme; Lionel Claff and his Imperial Hawaiian Band: Max and Harry Nesbitt in songs and duets, with ukulele accompaniment; A. P. Garland in another golf skit: We Three Girls in a musical act; Clapham and Dwyer in another spot of bother; and Marius Winter's Band. There will be a third golf skit by A. P. Garland.

On Friday, at 9.30 p.m., Arthur Fear will be the soloist in a light symphony concert, which will be conducted by Percy Pitt. The programme will include "Wotan's Farewell and Fire Music," from The Valkyrie (Wagner), sung by Arthur Fear with orchestra; and Suite, Casse Noisette (Tchaikowsky).

On Saturday, December 27th, at 7.30 p.m., "The Silver King" will be broadcast. Incidental music has been written by Dennis Arundell, and Peter Creswell will produce the play. The cast will include: Baliol Holloway as Wilfred Denver; Neil Curtis as Captain Herbert Skinner; H. O. Nicholson as Eliah Coombe; Marie Ney as Nell Denver; Madge Whiteman as Mrs. Skinner.

London Regional and Midland Regional.

The Christmas pantomime, "Little Red Riding Hood," will be broadcast regionally at 8 p.m. on Christmas Eve.

A vaudeville programme on Christmas Day at 9.5 p.m., will repeat the National vaudeville of Monday.

"The Silver King," which will be broadcast nationally on Saturday, will be heard regionally on Friday, December 26th, at 8 p.m.

Midland Regional.

A light musical programme on Wednesday at 9.35 p.m. from the Birmingham studio, will be entitled, "Here's a Health," by Charles Brewer.

Frederic Bentley in Revue.

Frederic Bentley will feature with Doris Bransgrove in a new revue which opens on January 26th on the Moss tour.

Duke and Deers.

We caught Du Calion the other night, between the houses, busily engaged on wood-carving for his antique doors, of which he has some splendid examples. By-the-way, Duke goes into Tom Arnold's "House that Jack built" shortly, and Pamela Du Calion opens at the Lyceum on Friday.

"THE ERA" LETTER BOX.

A stamped addressed envelope must be enclosed with application for each Letter. No circulars or parcels admitted to this List. No addition or omission can be made in this List after 12 noon Saturday. Whilst exercising all necessary care, we do not hold ourselves responsible for any loss sustained in connection with "The Era" Letter Box.

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Belphot Mr Baker E.
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Biscoe Mr H. J.
Black, Miss Marion.
Blake Miss Betty
Blanche, Miss Marie
Bloom, Mr. Eric
Boston Mr [illegible] H.
Botten, Messrs. (Circus Proprietors)
Boye Benton Mr F.
Brewer, Mr. Harold
Brignall Mr John
Britton, Mr. B.
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Carson, Miss Cassandra
Carter, Mr. Charles
Cecil, Miss Sylvia.
Chamberlain, Miss Vera
Charles Stanley, Mr. E.
Chisholm, Mr Robert
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Fitzroy Miss B.
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Frewin, Mr Harrison
Galloway, Mr Alberto
Garcia, Mr Enrico
Gibbs, Mr. C.
Ginnett Mr Fred
Gough, Mr. Wm. (Banjo)
Gowan Opera Comdy
Grahame, Miss Dorothy
Gre.., Mr. Percival
Greene, Mr. Desmond
Grey, Miss (Celliste)
Griggs, Mr Harry
Hancock Miss Grace
Harford, Mr Maurice
Harrison, Mr Max
Harrison, Miss Muriel.
Hartley, Miss Jennie
Heath, Miss Mary
Hilstrom, Miss Dora
Holland, Mr G. B.
Hope, Mrs. Alice
Irwin Twins The
Ivor, Miss Frances
Jackson Mr Edgar
Jay, Mr Ernest
Jewell, Mr Jimmy
Justus, Mr. Jerrard (Jerrard & Fine)
Kavanagh, Mr M.
Knowles, Mr Harley.
Langford, Mr Roy
Langley, Mr. Hubert
Lashwood, Mr George
Lawson, Miss Mary
Lawton, Mr. Sammy
Leeming, Mr. E. J.
Leister, Mr Fred
Lenton, Miss Olive
Lisle, Mr Oldham G.
Loraine, Miss Violet
Lord, Mr Bob
Mario, Miss Paola
Maclaren, Mrs. Wm. (Miss Lily Bandman)
McCormack Mr John
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Stewart, Mr. Soli
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Tacchi Mr
Temple, Miss Emma
Thompson, Mrs. Jack
Tree, Miss and Mr.
Turner Mrs A McNicol
Tussaud, Mr. Louis
Valerie, Miss Babs
Venus, Mrs. K.
Vernon Captain R.
Vernon Mr Claude
Walker, Mr. Sid
Walton, Mr. Pat
Warren, Mr Denier
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"THE ERA" PANTOMIME GUIDE.

Following is the fourth instalment of the Theatres which are producing Pantomime, with particulars of the cast, date of production, etc.

PROVINCES.

BRIGHTON WEST PIER.—"Robinson Crusoe"; author and composer, R. Effay; principal boy, Miriam Ferris; principal girl, Frances Buckland; second boy, Mai Eve; principal comedians, George Mayfield, Christo and Ford, Verne and Tait; producer, Reg Astley; musical director, Albert Gardiner; date of opening, December 26th.

BURY ROYAL (M., J. R. C. Hamilton).—"The Babes in the Wood"; libretto by Midj Leye; music by Reg. Bridge; principal boy, Nell Calvert, Robin Hood; principal girl, Bessie Burke, Maid Marion; other artists: Ethel Ryder (Fairy Content), Bren & Berel, the Robbers; Mona Maie, Pansy; Nora and Wyn, the Babes; Will Beanland, the Nurse; The Cosmo Girls; principal scenes, Home of Envy, Village of Sherwood, Nursery, Forest, Palace; produced by Will Beanland (assistant producer, Bert Pierson) on December 22nd for for one week at Bury; New Year's week at Crown Theatre, Eccles, and tour of six weeks.

EVESHAM WORCS. SCALA THEATRE (Gen. Mgr., Frank Ridge).—"Babes in the Wood"; book and lyrics by Percy H. Holmshaw; principal boy, Mena Stewart; principal girl, Florence Russell; second boy, Audrey Hawke; second girl, Molly Blakey; principal comedian, Bob Roberts; special scenes, The Village of May Day Merryfolk, Sherwood Forest, Butterfly Land and Robin Hood's Palace of Gold; producer, Bob Roberts; date of opening, Boxing Day, December 26th.

LEEDS THEATRE ROYAL.—"Jack and the Beanstalk"; principals, Cora Goffin, Tom Payne, Harry Stafford, George Franklin, Rich & Galvin, Robert Layton, Joan Stanbrough, Francis Laidler's Little Sunbeams, Renée Foster, Dolores and Cecila Nono, Tom Lucas, Max Rivers' 8 Paramount Girls, Pender Troupe, a Rolls Royce Beauty Chorus; date of production, December 23rd.

LOUGHBOROUGH ROYAL.—"Babes in the Wood" invented and arranged by Percy Mairs; principal boy, Doris Vi Driscoll; principal girl, Gertie Wilson; second boy, Edna Smith; second girl, Renee Duggan; principal comedians, Billy Camp, Allan Rochester, Brothers Seward; special scenes, The Village of Sunnyville, The Palace of Delight; specialties, Vera Rudd and Partner, Tiny & Toots, Beattie & Delva, Arley the Juggling Clown, Yalra, Vicari's Tony Tod? dlers, The Brum-e-Gem Buttons; producer, Percy Mairs; date of opening, December 24th.

NOTTINGHAM THEATRE ROYAL.—"Aladdin"; principals, Winnie Collins (Aladdin), Dan Leno, Junr. (Widow Twankey), Tom Prior, Arthur Rees, Norah and Peg St. John, Pauline Stone, Anwin Hart, Virginia Perry (Princess So-Shi), Percy Cahill, Horace Lane, Gustave Bourget, Miss Euphan Maclaren's Dancers, Bros. Curran, Evie Carcroft, Francis Laidler's Little Sunbeams; date of production, December 26th.

PRESTON HIPPODROME.—"Babes in the Wood," by Byam Wyke, with lyrics by Chas. Norton and music by Oliver Campbell; scenery by C. A. Paling and B. Vennimon; costumes designed and executed by Madam Nellie White; principal boy (Robin Hood), Dorothy Eckford; principal girl (Marian), May Mac; principal comedian (Simon), Sid Dooley, (Babes) Toss and Betty; (Dame) Alf Passmore, (Sheriff) Jas. Crasey, (Robbers) Costello Bros., (Scarlet) Eleanor Payne, (Marjory) Georgina Brown, (Demon) Dennis O'Shea, (Fairy) Dorothy Reenore, (Friar Tuck) Will Abbot, The Leslie Girls, Madam Jackson's Manchester Mites, Solini & Pepito; principal scenes, The Village, The Dell, The Forest, The Toy Scenes, and The Palace.

ROCHDALE THEATRE ROYAL.—"Goldilocks and the Three Bears"; cast includes John Armstrong, Tom E. Wills, Bunty Gordon, Billie Bentley, Millie & Mabs, May Liddle, Leslie Crisp, Ruby Regene, Leon Dodd, Lena Askew, Ledo Girls, Radio Dancers, The Valmar Trio; producer, Leon Dodd; date of opening, December 26th.

ST. HELENS THEATRE ROYAL.—"Sinbad the Sailor"; author and composer, Jack Gillam and John Peacock; principal boy, Marie Le Cren; principal girl, Laurie Widburn; second boy, Amy Leslie; second girl, Susie Cachen; principal comedians, Jack Gillam, Arthur Clarence, Bob Beatty; special scenes, The Diamond Valley and Palace of Roses; producer, Jack Gillam; date of opening, December 22nd.

TORQUAY OPERA HOUSE.—"The Babes in the Wood"; principal boy, Ivy Helder, Robin Hood; principal girl, Ethel Astelle, Maid Marion; Dame Wilkins, Tom Robbins; The Robbers, Jimmie Mac and Partner; Baron Bigsides, Tom Solly; Fairy Silver, Clarise Howard; Wil Scarlett, Audrey Mitchell; Allen A'Dale, Esme Orchard; Friar Tuck, Willie Rosenberg; The Babes, Dolly Doyle and Jean Fairclough; Pimple, Tommy Trinder; specialties by The Twelve Glen Louise Dancers, The Eight Snowdrops, The London Four and The Lupesku Sisters; principal scenes, The Village of Merryfolk, The School House, The Baron's Kitchen, Robin Hood's Retreat, Nottingham Fair, The Baron's Castle and Robin Hood's Palace; produced by Tom Solly for Percy H. Holmshaw and Arthur Joel.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS OPERA HOUSE.—"Goody Two Shoes," a Lambert & Russell production; author and composer, Harry Russell, additions by George Grogie; principal boy, Alice Waldie; principal girl, Queenie Pickford; second boy, Vera Vivian; second girl, Susan Richmond; principal comedians, George Grogie (Pickles), Harry Levaine (Mother Hubbard), Reginald Jecks (Squire), Krazi (musical clown); special scenes, Glendale Village, Fairground, The Cornfield, Mystic Wood, Fairy Bower, etc.; producer, George Grogie; date of opening, December 26th.

YORK OPERA HOUSE & EMPIRE.—On December 22nd Jack Tully presents "Cinderella," with Babette Carol in the title rôle and Gwen Regent as the Prince. Other parts will be played by Tommy Francis, Fred Miller, Harry Swan, Harry Wheeler, Jack Knowles, J. G. Ricketts, with specialities by Wheel and Whoa, cyclists.

YORK THEATRE ROYAL.—Mr. Geo. Brydon Phillips will produce "Aladdin" on Boxing Day.

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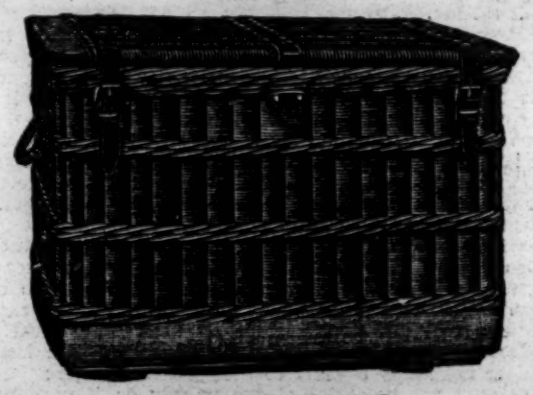
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Sale of Theatres.

At the Midland Hotel, Manchester, on Wednesday, Messrs. Knight, Frank & Rutley sold, by auction, the following Theatres and Picture House in the North of England:—The Grand Theatre, at Lancaster, capable of seating 800; The Theatre Royal, Whitehaven, Cumberland; these being the only Theatres in the respective towns. The same Firm also sold The Hippodrome Picture House (formerly the Grand Theatre), West Hartlepool, County Durham, with a seating capacity of over 1,200.

"Carpet Slippers."

The first performance of Mr. W. A. Darlington's New Arabian Nights' entertainment, "Carpet Slippers," will be given at the Embassy on Christmas Eve, when the Repertory Company will be augmented by Miss Claire Harris, Mr. Wallace Evennett, Mr. Sebastian Shaw, and Miss Leonora Corbett. "Carpet Slippers" is in three acts, the first of which takes place at an English baronial hall, and the last two somewhere in an Eastern desert.

The VARIETY WORLD

Lady Ratlings Ball.

It has now been arranged for the Lady Ratlings Ball to be given on Sunday evening, Jan. 25th, at Grosvenor House, Park-lane, and early application should be made for tickets. A super cabaret, which will include the lady "stars" of vaudeville, has been arranged, and souvenirs will be presented to each lady present. By the way, we noticed a large muster of Rats and Ratlings at headquarters last Friday afternoon, when Minnie O'Farrell was giving her final tea party as Queen Ratling.

Lady Stoll's Christmas Party.

One of the largest Christmas Eve parties in London will be given by Lady Stoll to 500 disabled ex-soldiers and their wives and children at War Seal Mansions, Fulham. Lady Stoll will receive the guests at 3.30, and hand each man and woman a ten-shilling note and numerous other gifts.

After high tea, toys will be distributed from the Christmas tree by Mr. Leslie Stoll, as Father Christmas. Lady Stoll has herself made the dresses for most of the dolls on the tree. At six o'cock there will be an all-star variety entertainment, at which the following artists have kindly promised to appear: Keith Wilbur, Jean Kennedy, Osborne and Perryer, Scott and Whaley, Arthur Astill, Billy Bennett, Cal and Nona Kay, Dorrie Dene and A. C. Astor. Two sets of "talkie" apparatus have been installed, by kind permission of Picturetone, Ltd., and one film will be shown for adults and another for the children.

This party is the twelfth of the series given by Lady Stoll. Tenants of the War Seal Foundation do not occupy their comfortable homes as recipients of charity. There is no suggestion of anything of the sort in the conduct of the establishment. The men pay their bit of rent, each earning such income as his injuries allow, each free to come and go and to live his own life. Sir Oswald Stoll himself inaugurated the scheme, giving the freehold sites upon which the War Seal Mansions now stand. Sir Oswald also paid the whole of the expenses of propaganda and administration—these representing his personal tribute to the British fighting man, totalling some £40,000.

Two Famous Dancers.

When Nadejda Nicolaeva, the Russian ballerina (appearing at the Manchester Hippodrome during the first week of Jack Buchanan's "Stand Up and Sing" at the Palace) came to London from the Continent six years ago, she had as her first dancing partner Anton Dolin, the young Irish speciality and classical exponent now so well known in first-class musical shows. The two separated after their first association at the Palladium, and, by the chances of the business, never met again until last week, when they were able to greet each other again. Anton Dolin is appearing in "Stand Up and Sing."

Collins' Reverts Again.

Variety is back again at Collins', Islington, with a big boom, the bill containing old favourites such as King and Benson, with a new act but voices and comedy as good as ever, Harry Champion, Rosie Lloyd, Buster and the Avolos, Artemus and Stevens and Mott.

Florence Smithson in Variety.

Florence Smithson, after a long tour with her own shows, opens in variety next week at the Finsbury Park Empire.

Gene Sheldon Stays.

Gene Sheldon, the pantomimist, is not going home yet, being booked for two weeks at the Palace in C. B. Cochran's varieties.

Pierrette as Principal Boy.

Miss Marjorie Clayton, who is playing Prince Charming in "Cinderella" at Derby Grand Theatre this Christmas, began her career as a member of the Black and White, a highly successful concert party run for several years by her parents in Birmingham. Her two younger sisters were also in the troupe. Her first regular theatre engagement was at Birmingham Alexandra in pantomime four or five years back. She soon advanced, becoming principal girl in "Robinson Crusoe" at Plymouth in 1927, and the succeeding year saw her as principal boy in the same pantomime at Huddersfield. She would have played Robin Hood in "Goldilocks" at Manchester last winter, but illness unfortunately laid her up.

Bob. Lloyd and Betty Hill.

We are glad to hear from Bob. Lloyd that he has fully recovered from the effects of a broken wrist, which happened a few weeks ago, and is now able to swing his charming partner—Betty Hill—about better than ever. Bob and Betty are appearing this week at the Palace, Plymouth, and on Monday week will resume in town at the London Shoreditch.

"Wide Awake."

The statement in a recent issue that Chas. Baldwin designed "Wide Awake" was incorrect, as Jose Brookes—the Proprietress of this popular show—was entirely responsible for the designing and production of "Wide Awake," which is the special attraction this week at the Hippodrome, Coventry, with Aston to follow.

The Oddments.

Revnell and West, who are creating great enthusiasm at the Palace, Bath, this week, return to town on Monday, when they will be a big feature at the South London.

Jack Somers' Ten Years at Stratford.

A few days ago, Jack Somers completed his tenth year as Manager of the Empire, Stratford. It only seems a few years ago that Jack commenced his duties with Moss Empires, and the time has passed very happily for Jack, as he has been extremely popular with all concerned.

Syd. Seymour Back in Town.

Syd. Seymour and his Mad Hatters are at the Alexandra, Stoke Newington, this week, one of their last visits to London before Syd.'s Continental tour.

Cheeky Chappy Back at Holborn.

Max Miller, the cheeky chappy, was so successful at his recent visits to the Holborn and Palladium that he is again a big feature at Holborn next week.

Neil Neilson Joins Another Revue.

Neil Neilson took up the part of chief comedian in Talbot O'Farrell's "Fancy Free" at the Finsbury Park Empire this week.

Felice Napier.

Felice Napier, the beautiful young singer with the Toto Road Show, returns to town next week at the Shepherd's Bush Empire.

Lily Moore for Africa.

Lily Moore, the comedienne, makes her last appearance this week at the Metropolitan, prior to sailing for a South African tour.

Circus at Manchester.

Belle Vue, Manchester, opened on Monday, another circus attraction for the Christmas season, which will continue until the end of January. It is staged in the spacious King's Hall, which will hold 7,000 people; and performances are to be given twice daily, excepting on the 29th and 30th December, when it has been arranged for Maurice Chevalier to make four personal appearances. The circus is on the grand scale, comprising sixteen acts of the traditional circus type, and the master of the ring is Mr. George Lockhart.

Novelty Divertissements.

One of the most delightful acts on the screen stage to be seen is the brilliant display given by Francis A. Mangan's Tillerettes, at the Paramount, Manchester. Their show consists of "Novelty Divertissements," with original dances arranged by Ethel Helliwell; a beautiful "Ballet Irridescent"; "A Street in Montmartre," with Ben Dova in a sensational act; and the "Ponies on Parade" feature, with the 24 Mangan Tillerettes.

Jean Kennedy in Town.

In the interval between running her own successful road show, Jean Kennedy, the Scotch comedienne, is fulfilling many important tour engagements. She returned to the Coliseum this week, and on Monday will be at Finsbury Park Empire.

George Graves Joins Revue.

George Graves opens on Monday at Cardiff Empire in Tom Arnold's "Folies Bergere" revue.

Sid Burns Books Malinoffs.

The Four Malinoffs have been booked by Sidney Burns to open March 1st in revue at Oslo.

Leicester Palace Artists and Charity.

The artists appearing last week at the Leicester Palace raised £5 3s. 6d. for the Leicester Mail "Santa Claus" Fund, when they went out carolling, on Thursday evening, after their second house show. It was a kindly act, and their efforts were much appreciated. The artists taking part were the Three Australian Boys, Harry and Marjorie Ristori, Skeets Martin, Dudley Dale, the Rego Twins, and the Eight Austin Babies. The party numbered thirty.

Elephants Shut Out.

Last week Powers' Performing Elephants had an enforced holiday. They were to have topped the bill at the Hippodrome, Leeds, but when the animals arrived on Monday night the stage door was too small to admit them. Mr. Power and the theatre staff tried their utmost to coax Lena, the largest elephant through the doorway, but their efforts were in vain. In consequence, with Mr. Francis Laidler's permission Mr. Tom Lucas, and Rich and Galvin, all of whom are rehearsing for the Royal pantomime, fill the position (metaphorically) on Monday and Tuesday nights, and from Wednesday onwards Olsen's Sea Lions deputised.

Teddy Knox and Hal Swain.

On Wednesday next, December 31st, the Society meet for the second of the winter competitions at Molesey Hurst. Arrangements for the annual general meeting, to take place late in February, are well in hand.

Mr. F. W. Hodgkinson was elected a member at the committee meeting held on Friday last. His handicap is rated at 12.

Vaudeville Golfing Society.

The provincial tie for the Walwork Cup was settled during last week between W. J. Murley and J. P. O'Malley, the former winning, and thus qualifies to meet Cyril Duke in the final.

The date of the annual ball has been provisionally fixed for Sunday, February 15th. The venue is being arranged immediately, and the tickets will be priced at 35s. for a double and £1 for a single. An elaborate cabaret is to be put on, and will be under the direction of Messrs. Billy Bennett, Charles Naughton, Billy Leonard,

Fred Miller's Success.

Fred Miller's appearance at the Holborn Empire last week created quite a stir, several agents waking up to "discover" a comedian, who is already a star.

Four Harmony Kings Returning.

Ivan H. Browning, of the Four Harmony Kings, tells us he is returning to England next week from the Continent. They have had a wonderful time at the Plaza, Paris, the new theatre where Percy Murray, as manager, is reporting wonderful success. They have also been to the Prince's Resident Palace, Brussels, and the Theatre Odeon, Milan. They open at the Palladium, return to the Trocadero and Empress Rooms, will also play the new Trocadero Cinema, and are broadcasting from 2LO.

For South Africa.

The following artists are sailing from Southampton during the next two weeks to fulfil engagements with African Theatre, Ltd., booked by the I.V.T.A., Ltd.: On December 19th by R.M.S. "Edinburgh Castle," Amy and Cal Carter, Dorrey Sisters and Hilda; on Dec. 26th by R.M.M.V. "Winchester Castle," Maud Selkirk and Terry Glyn, Kaye and Kahn.

"THE SHOW'S THE THING."

AT EAST HAM PALACE.

One of Archie Pitt's best productions, "The Show's the Thing," introduces locally a company of hard working enthusiasts who, to the last chorus girl, know how to make themselves individually a tower of strength to the whole entertainment. It is composed, as usual, of sketches and musical items, but each one has an appeal of its own and contains a special novelty. Doris Hare, at the head of affairs, displays a wealth of vivaciousness and can sing and dance whilst her acting, especially in the domestic scene, is to be commended. Chris. Wortman is a young man who proves very useful in every sphere of entertainment, whilst Stanley Brereton has a wealth of versatile ability. Malcolm Reynold does well in several parts, and Terri Storri is delightful in her dancing. Dorothy Ciro does well all that is required of her, and Binx Bird is another useful member of the cast, which includes also Wynne Silver, Betty Kay, Vera Kennett, Priscilla Blythe, Eric Stuart, Cyril Denny and Martin Shields. Louis Ross is the musical director for the company, Cliff Clifton stage manager, and C. Tatten Hall, the manager.

COMING BOOM IN VARIETY.

Music-Halls' Happy New Year Contrasted With Unhappy Old Year.

By M. WILLSON DISHER.

Faith in the future of the music-halls need not be misplaced. Having survived the ordeals of 1930, the worst encountered since their history began, they may be trusted to withstand any kind of shock whatsoever. "Earthquake" was not too strong a word to indicate the great change which took place in the first months of the Old Year. The marvel is that any part of the fabric of variety was left standing. No resistance seemed possible against the "talkies." The novelty was unlikely to wear off before they were firmly established in every theatre and hall of considerable size; and while this new form of entertainment appealed to the public as "some new thing," it impressed managements as economically sound. Long before this we had been assured that variety was dead. If it had been, the corpse would now have vanished even more completely than those in "mystery thrillers."

Many a music-hall, of course, did "go talkie." The number of acts required throughout the length and breadth of the land rapidly diminished in consequence. On top of this came the slump of the summer, which affected all places of amusement alike. Yet variety still received sufficient public support to save even those halls that had been "wired" from being handed over to the films. When the slump ended, the recovery in public confidence was even more evident in music-halls than in picture theatres.

New Conditions.

But variety has had to change in order to adapt itself to new conditions. One "bright particular star" is now almost a necessity to every bill. The system may already show signs of having been over-exploited; all the same, I fancy it has come to stay. Performers who are capable of keeping an audience amused once it has been drawn in, receive much less than their due. Celebrities who are capable of drawing that audience in receive all the credits and nearly all the profits. There is no need to dwell upon the disadvantages and injustices of such a policy. For the present, we are forced to admit that it works even when the audience which attends to bask in the light of one well-known smile is bored by all that comes before or after.

The Palace Revival.

Providing there are stars enough, this way of compelling all sorts and conditions of people to pay attention to the halls may bring about a new boom in variety. In any case it is already restoring the Palace to its early love. On January 5th it re-opens with "Cochran's 1931 Varieties," whose success is assured by the presence at the top of the first bill of The Four Marx Brothers. Their popularity, created over here by those rollicking talkies, "Cocoanuts" and "Animal Crackers," at the Carlton, is so great that "film fans" will be turned into "voderville fans" for the time being, if not lastingiy. For the benefit of those who have yet to learn which Marx is which, I must explain that Groncho is the bespectacled orator who sets logic, possibility and convention at defiance. Harpo is the curly-haired mute who plays the harp like an angel, eats telephones, puts his knee in any unsuspecting hands that he finds lying idle, and constantly gives chase to the blonde who takes his fancy. Then there are Chico Marx, the pianist who cannot finish the piece of rumpty-thump music he is playing because he has gone past the ending without noticing it, and Zeppo, the sane one, who can yet help to compose a letter which must surely be the vaguest on record.

Without Charles B. Cochran's timely aid, we should have little cause for congratulation over the present condition of variety. The Victoria Palace now presents a revue which although its leading lights are Nervo and Knox is far more "theatre" than "hall." The Alhambra, although the year's tenancy of the film company has ended, is being run by Sir Oswald Stoll as a picture theatre still. There would remain, in or near the West End of London, only the Coliseum, the Palladium and the Holborn Empire to continue as strongholds of the programme of turns—if the Palace had not become a very notable fourth.

The Making of Stars.

What managements must learn to do is to create stars. Though the public has first say in the matter, its taste can be guided. Against the argument that Maurice Chevalier could not have reached his present supremacy without Hollywood's aid, we must realise that Sir Harry Lauder maintains his place at the head of his profession without any assistance from the talkies. Gracie Fields became a star because Archie Pitt's revues provided the framework she needed for her North Country humour, her intensity in pathos and her deft burlesques of "sub-stuff." Layton and Johnstone have become capable of drawing crowded houses simply by sticking to their faith in melody and rhythm. Variety can create its own stars.

There never has been a comedian with a sense of character finer than Will Fyffe's. We are all agreed on that. Though his appearances are not styled "appearances in the flesh," he never fails to stir an audience to keen enthusiasm and deep-throated laughter. If he absented himself from London awhile and returned as a celebrity booked to appear for a fortnight at £4,000 a week, I can imagine that fond mothers would be holding up their babes at the stage-door for him to kiss, and lines of hero-worshippers queuing up at the box-office to buy tickets at any price. Perhaps that scheme may not be worked twice, but showmanship could certainly expend its cunning upon Will Fyffe with benefit to all, public included, concerned.

Varied Assortment of Clowns.

The Old Year has also been notable for bringing Toto to London. Though well-known in Paris, Berlin, and New York, he had not been persuaded to visit us before although I, for one, had done my best to bring his name before a management's notice. He is a new kind of clown—a mixture of the grotesque and the whimsical, rather than the wildly comical. When he emerges from an almost incredibly tiny car and then pulls out a suitcase and dog as well, what we witness seems less like a joke than a happening in a dream. Toto is a toy that falls, somersaults, dances, and collapses in a way impossible (or so it seems) to a living person. Once he shared the top of the bill at the Coliseum with Noni, who is, in sharp contrast, a very human clown. He suffers or is glad, according to whether his wits triumph or his body undergoes the indignity of a fall. We are told not to hope for the return of Grock. In his absence, however, we may console ourselves with Noni's pranks in his absurdity with Horace, or while conducting that lively show which accompanies the playing of his "Golden Screnaders" band.

Celebrities of the Halls.

Not the least of my happy moments at the halls in 1930 were created by the return of old favourites. Neil Kenyon renewed our delight in Dunrobin while at the Coliseum, Florrie Forde made us sing the chorus of her rollicking old songs at the Holborn Empire, Harry Champion warmed the cockles of our hearts with his hearty humour at Shepherd's Bush, and Sam Mayo gave us one of the best ballads of the year when he sat a doll on his piano at the Palladium and solemnly warned it against becoming "Like your poor old, Dad"—there was a touch of human nature in this which pulled at our heart-strings even while we laughed.

The death of Harry Weldon was a severe blow to all who appreciated his unerring instinct for the humour of topsy-turvydom. The tragedy of Gordon Saunders is as keenly felt even though the sketches in which he took part still hold their places as the merriest to be seen on the halls. The next performance, after his sudden death in the dressing-room, was a severe test for "St. Michael's," but Will Hay proved himself too good a showman not to live up to the time-honoured exhortation of "The show goes on." On the dullest day of the most dismal season, the nonsense of "What's In A Name?" never fails in its effect.

While rushing headlong to ruin in his sketches of frenzied drunkenness and riotous love-making, Billy Caryll has steadily climbed to fame. He is now sure of his place among the public's favourites. Another who has been making rapid progress is Jenny Howard. High spirits are what the halls need most, and high spirits are what, she excites in us as in herself. Her skill lies in hiding her skill. We might almost believe she comes on the stage merely for a romp, so spontaneous is her smile, and so carefully concealed all evidence that her pranks have been rehearsed. She has a gift for taking us by surprise. Without a word of warning she breaks into mimicry of some comedian or a piece of happy nonsense. Harry and Marjorie Ristori are others who have managed to forge ahead despite the decrease of opportunities. Douglas Wakefield was the "discovery" of the year. He must certainly be seen in "The New Garage" again and again.

Some comedians who were "promising" but a few years ago, are now "classics." There is no need to bestow further praise upon Billy Bennett for his mock-romantic verses, upon G. S. Melvin for his mastery of make-up, upon Clarkson Rose for his topical ballads, upon Wee Georgie Wood for his pictures of boyhood, or upon Lily Morris for her studies of cockney life; such performances as these are the backbone of variety. There are several other names to be added to these, notably The Houston Sisters, Clapham and Dwyer, Hetty King, Horace Kenny, Dorrie Dene, Dick Henderson, Charles Austin, the O'Gorman Brothers, Robb Wilton, Billy Danvers, and Randolph Sutton, but there are too many for my memory to hold them all—which is proof enough of variety's vitality. The Royal Performance last May gave official recognition to others, including George Clarke, Coram, Tom Payne, and Vera Hilliard, Gillie Potter and Gaston Palmer. George Robey and Nellie Wallace, almost veterans compared with some of these, held their own.

Sketches of the Year.

Among the sketches of the year, those which made the chief claim on our attention were H. C. G. Stevens' "To Meet the King," which Sybil Thorndike acted at the Coliseum, and Vernon Sylvaine's "The Road of Poplars," the prize-winner in the "John o' London's" competition, which was presented on the same stage. It is strange that two "spiritualistic" pieces should come to mind first; they made a deeper impression than the "vehicles" supplied for the use of Yvonne Arnaud, Tallulah Bankhead, and Phyllis Neilson-Terry.

Visitors from the States.

American visitors have been so numerous that only a sketchy survey of their performances can be attempted. Jerry and Her Baby Grands, the Lime Trio and the Michon Brothers were three of the most original acts among them. Many of the others were either pairs of burlesque tumblers, or a man and girl uttering wisecracks at each other's expense. In addition, there were several "adagio" quartettes, consisting of three strong men who threw a slip of a girl about. These are all entertaining, but it is very evident that originality is prized more highly in London than in New York.

THE BIG CIRCUS OF OLYMPIA.

GENUINE THRILLS OF THE SAWDUST RING.

By M. WILLSON DISHER.

After the tiny pony had walked in and out of the great horse's legs, the youngster who held on to the back of my chair at Olympia said, "That is because it is its mother." When the tumblers were somersaulting at break-neck speed he gravely warned us all that they would be hurting themselves sooner or later. When the Bronettes had finished swamping each other with "little drops of water," he loudly proclaimed, "Now those two will have to go to bed."

You may gather from his remarks that the genuine thrill of the circus is created by Bertram Mills' big show. There is excitement enough among the spectators to make us believe the glories of old Astley's depicted on the souvenir programmes of this season's opening performance, are blossoming again on earth. Most of the twenty-odd acts are enthralling novelties. On his tour of the world in quest of some new thing, Bertram Mills has succeeded in bringing home to London "lions 'n' tigers 'n' everything" displayed in such a way as to combine the pleasure of old association with the surprise of feats never seen before.

The result demonstrates how sure is this showman's instinct. As I have stated in the foreword of his programmes, "To search for the world's best acts from some thousands of the second-best and third-best needs a judgment unaffected by mental fatigue, bodily discomfort, an occasional fever or disease. Even when the flawless score for the Christmas programme has been chosen, there still remains the problem of packing so many gifts into one stocking. This is an art invented and brought to perfection by Mr. Mills. Two troupes of jugglers or acrobats are frequently formed, for Olympia alone, into one. Experts in feats no other performers can imitate are persuaded to leave out all the preliminaries which lead up to their renowned 'hair-raising speciality.' All sorts and conditions of show-people, from all sorts and conditions of show-places, need to be instructed how to cut the cackle and come to the 'osses. Considering that practically every one of these has spent a lifetime in giving definite form to an act which need never vary at everyday performances, the difficulty of changing 'routine' for the special benefit of you and me at Olympia is serious enough to make many a show man give up his project in despair. But here, in Mr. Mills' tent, the miracle has been achieved. The stocking that has needed a year to fill takes only two or three hours to unpack."

In those two or three hours a stranger to the joys of sawdust and tan could complete his education concerning their nature and variety more thoroughly than if he spent months travelling from show to show of less magnificence. He would learn far more from one visit to Bertram Mills' show than from all the articles and books on the subject. There is some difficulty in writing about the circus. Turn yourself into an artist and then perhaps you could show what we find to marvel at in Olympia's ring each Christmas. Seurat could do it. On his canvas of "Le Cirque" in the Louvre there is all the bliss of feeling the thrill of rushing movement. Against a background of spectators who sit in petrified stillness, the Columbine of the saddle floats towards us, slanting inwards at a seemingly perilous angle, while the ring-master's whip writhes beneath the belly of her white horse. An acrobat, inverted in mid-air, pushes the earth away from him by mystic pressure, and in the foreground a clown's open mouth makes you listen for the sound of his "horse laugh."

Very nearly everything is here—but not the thud of hoofs and the rousing smell. And, now that one comes to think of the importance of ears and nostrils, it is plain that even the artist leaves much unsaid about one elusive charm of sawdust and tan. Without that whiff (no matter how faint) of ammonia from jungle-fur as prelude, could our breasts be prepared to feel again the old, accustomed delights? It mixes itself insidiously into the breeze from the stables, and this gathers to itself dozens of exhalations from elephants, sea-lions, paint-pots, carpentry and washed carriages, until every passer-by, unable to withstand the sheer excitement of it, walks up.

That is why there must always be horses. I believe there are people with souls so dead that they consider the best of all possible preparations for Olympia to be a festive meal. The real way, of course, is to make the round of the stables. If you spend enough time doing this to know each occupant by name, you are in a far better position to appreciate the quality of their "personalities" when they come before the public's gaze. Schumann's horses arouse greater admiration in my breast year by year. Whether ridden or "at liberty," they are the fine flower of the union between horsemanship and showmanship. The liberty troupes, now as always, create the grand climax of the performance, while Oscar, Ceciele and Ernst's triple *haute école*, is the most delectable act for connoisseurs.

The lions are presented by Maximillian, and the tiger is an accomplished beast who rides on horseback. Tiebor makes his bow as the trainer of twelve sea-lions who are musicians and equilibrists as well as jugglers. Loyal's Poodles are yet another "animal act." But human skill and daring predominates. The Wallendas are veritable wizards of the high wire, the Yung China troupe the liveliest of gymnasts, the Hadji Ali Arabs whirlwind somersaulters, the Bedin-Tafani Troupe amazing balancers, and the Deblars dexterous riders on stilt-cycles. Albert Powell is remarkable for a new combination of powers: he is a contortionist who performs on the trapeze, and thus carries out feats which we have never before witnessed.

But I must return again to the subject of horsemanship for this is, rightly, the strength of the show. The Carolis present a jockey act remarkable for a somersault from one horse to the one behind it, and Les Neufs Casis even surpass the marvels of the Casis troupe we saw a few years ago. Prieto's mules assist in the comic relief which is otherwise provided by a whole army of clowns. At the head of the list the name of Whimsical Walker once more appears to our great joy. The Bronetts are back again, amusing us more than ever.

The Three Sloans are agile stilt-walkers, and three troupes of midgets unite to form picturesque spectacles. A special thrill is excited by performers from nearer home. Cuthbertson's Kilties give a rousing display of Highland dances, and the Pipe Band of the Queen Victorian School, Dunblane, stirs us with the music of Old Caledonia. What other showman than Bertram Mills could bring attractions from so many widely different sources and organise them all into a show which holds together perfectly? But all the praise we can shower upon it cannot exceed this: he upholds at Olympia his own high standard.

Octogenarian Entertainer's Death.

At Shrewsbury Cemetery on Thursday the funeral took place of Mr. William Caddick, who died in hospital on December 15th, at the age of 82 years, from pneumonia after an accident caused through slipping down in the street on the previous Wednesday.

Mr. Caddick was professionally known as Harry Caddick and had travelled with many theatrical and operatic companies, as well as Butterworth and Christy. In the early 'eighties he toured as a pianist with the Dan Leno Variety Company. He married Miss Annie Purcell, who was solo violinist in the same company.

In 1885 Mr. Caddick became lessee and manager of the Theatre Royal, Runcorn, a position he held until 1906, when the theatre was burnt down. From that time he has resided in Shrewsbury, but did not take any active part in the theatrical world. He was a great friend of Henry Irving, from whom he received a life-size picture of the actor in the character of "Hamlet." The funeral was attended by Mr. Caddick's two brothers, two nieces and four nephews. There were many beautiful wreaths. He is survived by his wife and does not leave any family.

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FROM THE SONG PUBLISHERS.

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As anticipated, the Wright songs are well to the fore in all pantomimes. Producers are unanimously agreed that our catalogue this year contains numbers suited to every possible situation, and artists as usual are 100 per cent: Wright.

"Say A Little Prayer For Me" is undoubtedly the ballad hit of the year, and in Horatio Nicholls' "Gipsy Melody" we have a very close second. "Make Up Your Mind You're Gonna Be Young" is a really sensational chorus song and will be featured in every pantomime throughout the length and breadth of the country. The uproariously funny "Gorgonzola" is the choice of all discerning comedians, and a cert. hit.

"The King's Horses" offers stupendous production possibilities and all producers are taking advantage of this smashing success. At the South London Palace, where George Bliss is presenting his pantomime "Cinderella," the Wright songs are very well in evidence. The charming and vivacious principal boy, Elsie Denham, is featuring "Say A Little Prayer For Me," "Make Up Your Mind You're Gonna Be Young," two numbers admirably suited to her, while as a duet with Charles Regan, Miss Denham is definitely using the comedy song "Gorgonzola." Peggy Panas, the charming Cinderella in the same show, will feature "Exactly Like You." All the above numbers are sure of a hearty reception, as they are in the hands of very capable artists.

At the Palace Theatre, Chelsea, where Robson & Paling are producing "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," Miss Millie Jillson, the artistic and dashing principal boy, will be featuring "Make Up Your Mind You're Gonna Be Young," which is the greatest chorus song of the year, also "The King's Horses," which will be a very big production number. Miss Elsa Cowie, the fairy in the same pantomime, will feature Horatio Nicholls' latest ballad, "Gipsy Melody," while Pearl Divine, the principal girl, has chosen another great ballad from the pen of Horatio Nicholls, namely, "Say A Little Prayer For Me." Scotch Kelly, principal comedian, has decided on the outstanding comedy song of the year, "Gorgonzola," and the O'Shea Girls will feature "I Like To Do Things For You."

Percy Holmshaw produces "Robinson Crusoe" at the Granville Theatre, Walham Green on Boxing Day, and the Wright songs are very much to the fore. Lilly Lassah, the Principal Boy, will feature "Make Up Your Mind You're Gonna Be Young," a number which suits Miss Lassah like the proverbial glove and which we know will be one of the hits in the show. Doris Prosser, the Fairy, will feature "Say a Little Prayer For Me" as a solo number, while Horatio Nicholls' "Gipsy Melody" will also be sung by Miss Prosser, and again used as a finale.

Clifford Atkinson, the Cannibal King, has chosen the marvellous ballad, "Song of the Dawn." May Royal, the Dame, in conjunction with Alec Harland and Al. Doran are making a concerted item of the great comedy song, "Gorgonzola," which undoubtedly will be a riot. Other Wright songs in the pantomime are "On the Sunny Side of the Street" and "Exactly Like You."

At the Lyceum Theatre, the Bros. Melville will present the great kiddies' pantomime, "Robinson Crusoe," Miss Kitty Reidy, the charming Principal Boy, will feature Horatio Nicholls' "Gipsy Melody," while Constance Carpenter, the Principal Girl, has decided on "Say a Little Prayer For Me." The duet between Miss Reidy and Miss Carpenter will be "Exactly Like You." The new Eastern production number, "My Cradle is the Desert," will also play a big part in the scenic and vocal effects o fthe show.

Tom Vernon, who has several pantomimes this year, is producing "Dick Whittington" on the Stoll tour opening at Wood Green Empire, December 26th, that charming soprano vocalist Marion Edwardes plays Principal Girl, and is featuring Horatio Nicholls' "Gipsy Melody." Peggy Rhodes, the ever-popular and charmingly versatile Principal Boy, is featuring "Song of the Dawn," "Rolling Along," and "Say a Little Prayer For Me."

"The King's Horses," "Gorgonzola," "Happy Feet" and "Make Up Your Mind You're Gonna Be Young" are also being featured in the show.

Peter Derek, Limited.

It is not an easy matter for a new firm to compete with old-established firms in any line of business, and the Music Publishing business is perhaps one of the most difficult of all businesses. This Firm, however, has made great strides in the last twelve months and is rapidly coming to the fore. Apart from the fact that they have produced many very excellent numbers, the support they have received from the profession in general has been surprising, as, of course, artists of standing have been accustomed for so long to look to certain firms for their numbers that they would quite naturally be a bit dubious about exploiting publications of a comparatively new Firm.

Peter Derek, Limited, under the management of Mr. Michael Watson, have however gathered round them many prominent artists and band leaders from whom they have received wonderful support and encouragement. Their recent successes—"Sittin' on a Haystack," "I'm in Cupid's Garden," "Hindoo Love Birds," "Hoping and Dreaming," "Baby Angel," the piano novelty "Frolic," "When the Orange Trees Blossom in Spain," "I'm a Good Little Girl at Night"—to mention just a few—most of which are well represented in panto. this year, have shown how advisable it is for go-ahead artists to get in touch with this Firm when arranging their programmes for next season.

Either write in, or call and see Michael Watson, who will show you the stuff you want to make that act of yours a bigger success than ever!

Music Publishing Co.

The Music Publishing Company would like to take this opportunity to wish a right merry Christmas to all those friends who are featuring and playing "That Man of My Dreams," "My Sweet Temptation," "I Wish I Had a Sweetheart," and other M.P. Co. songs.

Sophie Tucker, Jack Payne and many other notables are having enormous success with "That Man of My Dreams."

This is going to be one of the biggest slow fox-trot songs in the New Year. In preparation: "My Mother's Lullaby," a song with a real "heart" lyric.

Paderewski Hypnotised.

Materna, the great Wagnerian singer who died recently, told in her biography how she saved Paderewski from disaster when he made his debut in Paris. Materna said that overwork, insufficient food, the nervousness inevitable to one who possesses such a highly-strung nature as his had so played upon him that he was incapable of standing on his feet. He sat in the artists' room behind the orchestra, shivering as with a fever. As Materna came off the stage after singing she heard him say: "It is impossible for me to play. I must go home." She at once decided to take the young man in hand. Sending for a basin of hot water, and an egg and some brandy from the neighbouring cafe, she made him plunge his hands into the hot water and drink the mixture of beaten-up egg and brandy. All the time she kept on telling him that he was going to play better than ever he had played in his life. "I hypnotised him," she said. "I insisted that he would find it easy to play. He finally went on to the stage and played gloriously."

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BORN OR MADE?

THE PROBLEM OF JUGGLING AND ACROBATICS.

By M. WILLSON DISHER.

Grave professors come to me with the request, "Can you supply us with evidence of hereditary talent among performers?"

"Yes," I answer, "there's the Californian sea-lion. His parents could juggle, he can juggle, and his children, if any, will be able to juggle."

Can heredity of a more remarkable kind be found in human beings? At first sight, the answer seems to be "Yes." Consider Rastelli. The blood of eight generations of jugglers runs in his veins, and he has surpassed them all.

Now, however, take note of Jean Florian, a youth whose devotion to the arts of balancing ball and baton reminds me strongly of Rastelli. His father was a bar-performer (not a synonym for elbow-lifter) and he wanted Jean to be his future partner. But the boy was resolved from the start to be a juggler. "Now," says Florian père, "he is the boss."

Bring up any healthy boy in a circus and he will master some sort of performance. If his parents are wire-walkers, the odds are that he will want to imitate them. He begins at an early age under expert guidance. If brought up under more favourable conditions than his parents, he will go one better—supposing he has no strain of contrariness in his nature that makes him seize the chance to do something else.

That, I think, fully explains "heredity" in the circus. Dr. J. M. Bulloch, the genealogist of the stage, shows how Thomas Cooke, born about 1752, gave to the world a son, grandsons, great-grandsons and great-great-grandsons who were riders. The Dutch family of Carré and the English family of Ginnett (descended from a French cuirassier who fought at Waterloo), have been riders from generation to generation. But what else would you expect from families whose education has been mainly equestrian from start to finish?

What happens to such heredity talent under modern conditions is shown by the Schumanns, the horsemen who have been coming to Olympia each Christmas. The next generation, educated away from the stables and allowed to choose its profession for itself, is likely to leave the circus. On the other hand, one of the finest riders of Continental circuses to-day was a stranger to show business until two or three years ago. There were no riders among Lydia Walterstein's grandparents and great-grandparents. She went into the ring because otherwise she would no longer have been able to keep her horses.

The three Fratellini, clowns of the Cirque d'Hiver in Paris, are the sons of a clown, and they are bringing up all their sons to be clowns. If you watch these boys, you will see little sign of the *vis comica* in the youngsters yet. The troupe suggests that clowns are not born but made.

The Lupino family has tumbled for two centuries. Stanley Lupino at the Gaiety and Lupino Lane on the pictures show what excellent tumblers they are. But if you believe that tumblers are tumblers at birth, get some old clown or acrobat to tell you how they used to be "made." The Training is milder now, but George Jackley's father told me how

(*Continued in column* 6).

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Rehearsal at 10 a.m. for—
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CHISWICK EMPIRE.
Rehearsal at 12 noon for—
"Aladdin."

WOOD GREEN EMPIRE.
Rehearsal at 12 noon for—
"Dick Whittington."

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Monday, December 29, 1930.

LONDON PAVILION.
Film, "HELL'S ANGELS."

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Rehearsal 12.
Robson & Paling presents "GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS."

METROPOLITAN THEATRE
Rehearsal 12.
G. H. Elliott, Gertie Gitana, Lily Moore, Four Junetros, Rob Daynar, Dean & Ross, Three Virginians, etc.

BRIXTON EMPRESS.
Bert Montague, Ltd., present "PARIS & PICCADILLY."

WATFORD PALACE.
Rehearsal 2.30.
George Bliss presents "CINDERELLA."

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Rehearsal 12.
Archie Pitt, Ltd., presents "THE SHOW'S THE THING."

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THE BOOKSHELF.

Artists of the Dance.

Sound critics of dancing have been few in comparison with those of the other Arts, simply because until some twenty years ago so few troubled to give any study to the Dance as an Art before writing about it at all. To-day that is altered, and one of the sanest and best-informed critics of theatrical dancing that we now have is Mr. Arnold L. Haskell, author of *Penelope Spencer, and other Studies*, a new volume in the interesting series, entitled "The Artists of the Dance," now in process of publication by the British-Continental Press. It is a book that should at once be added to every dancer's library. It can be read with equal pleasure by all, whether professionally interested or not, who wish to follow modern developments in the age-old art of the Dance and Ballet. It is the work of a specialist but not a pedantic specialist.

Mr. Haskell is a widely cultivated and keenly sympathetic critic who writes with wit, charm and an admirable sense of perspective, and one cannot but feel that he did well to devote a volume of the series to the work of such dancers as Penelope Spencer, the late Florence Mills, Alicia Markova and Tilly Losch, for each reposents the individualistic artist who really has "something to say," and who, whatever she may or may not owe to tradition, says it with a grace and style that are wholly her own. Mr. Haskell explains in his opening chapter that he has not put Penelope Spencer "top of the bill" because she is a greater artist than the others, more deserving of praise, but for a variety of other reasons, because she is "entirely self sufficient," she comes from no particular traceable tradition, and her work forms, therefore, an exceedingly fascinating study, the study of a choregraphist, a conceiver of dances and a dancer—if you will, a ballet company in miniature in one person. . . . She is creative, and her speciality is the *tableau de genre*"; and he rightly adds of her particular form of art that it "can be appreciated by all who flock to see that great discuse, Ruth Draper," and that it "possesses wit, humour, both kind and cruel, genuine beauty and the kind of thrill that a first-class jazz band can give to millions." With such points any one would agree who had seen Penelope Spencer's satirical dance, "The Funeral March of a Rich Aunt," or her graceful "Laideronette," or eerie "Elegiac Blues."

The author's tribute to the late Florence Mills, his brief explanation of the "jazz" spirit of modern times, and the distinction he draws between the negroid dance as such and its incompetent (because inappropriate?) performance by whites are all extremely interesting and admirably said, as are also his remarks on "inspiration and technique," which follow his well-deserved tributes to those accomplished dancers, Alicia Markova and Tilly Losch.

The book is a welcome addition to the "Artists of the Dance" series, which are remarkably well produced at 2s. 6d. net per volume.

M.P.

(*Continued from column* 4.)

thorough even a modern apprenticeship is. It would make an acrobat out of any promising boy no matter whether his father were dustman or bank manager.

Natural aptitude is distinct from acquired ability. In the circus, as elsewhere, it remains a mystery that heredity will not explain. One performer, after very brief experience, will suddenly manifest a skill far superior to all his rivals. He may be a clown, like Grock, whose father was a watchmaker. He may be a lion-tamer who was an incompetent tromboneer in the band the week before. He may be a tumbler who finds, perhaps to his own surprise, that to him walking the tight-wire is child's play.

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The Season's Greetings.

Numerous seasonable greetings from all parts of the country have reached me, and for each and all I return my sincerest thanks. I reciprocate heartily all the good wishes I have received and hope that bandsmen will find in the coming year more prosperity than they have enjoyed in the past.

There is every reason to hope that business will be brighter for musicians and that the restoration of the orchestras to the cinemas will go on steadily. An indication towards that end is supplied by the fact that the Stoll Cinema at Newcastle has installed a stage band for the Christmas week, and I fervently hope that this example will be generally followed in the picture palaces throughout the kingdom.

St. Hilda's for Olympia.

The music for the Circus at Olympia is again provided by St. Hilda's Band. St. Hilda's is the first brass band definitely to announce itself as a professional body. Most of its members were once miners. Both Mr. Southern, the manager, and Mr. Oliver, the Musical Director, have been connected with this famous band over twenty years, and were both coal-getters and miners during the years of their great successes. Both have performed before their Majesties King George and Queen Mary on five occasions. William Oughton, 23 years of age, who has been connected with this band over six years, is one of the foremost cornet virtuosos in the brass band world to-day. Another wonderful player is John Robertson, champion of New Zealand, a wizard on the cornet. Elijah Boam, the famous trombonist, has been with the band four years, and Robert Smith, solo euphonium, has been with them three years, while the soprano soloist, William Clegg, is an artist with a brilliant future. Each performer in the band possesses gold and silver medals.

London Dance Hall's Innovation.

I visited Tottenham Palais de Danse the other evening at the invitation of Mr. C. Rogers, who is manager of both the dance hall and the Palace Cinema adjoining, and he explained the new scheme of admission. Under the new arrangement recently inaugurated by the P.C.T., dancing is free, and an admission ticket costing one shilling is exchanged for refreshments at popular prices inside the dance hall. The result has been a gratifying success. On the evening of my visit more than 1,100 people were present, and others were still coming in when I left about 11 p.m.

Tottenham Palais, which is one of the largest dance halls in the country, is illuminated by thousands of coloured lights and large gaily-patterned Chinese lanterns. Scores of glass-topped tables surround the fenced-off dance floor, which is thirty-one feet longer than that of Wimbledon Palais de Danse. This palatial and comfortable hall has now become one of the most popular dance rendezvous in London, and the surprisingly well-dressed crowds which gather here nightly contradict the assertion that dancing in on the wane. It is quite usual for people to "pop in" for supper after the closing of the local cinemas.

The Blue Lantern.

It is customary for London dance clubs to claim a large number of prominent theatrical and musical stars as members. In the case of the Blue Lantern Club in Ham-yard, however, the claim is literally correct, for one can rarely pop in there without seeing one or other of the mighty present. The fact that the Club's director is that rising stage and film actor, Cecil Landeau, may, of course, have something to do with it.

In the circumstances it was obviously incumbent on the Club to produce the goods in the way of a band. Hence the engagement of Freddie Bamberger. Freddie, who was, of course, originally one of "The Two Hoffmans," has, incidentally, in his time been musical director at the Adelphi, Queen's and Vaudeville theatres as well. And he is still quite young!

Another interesting figure in the band is Lou Taylor, who officiates so ably in the percussion department. Lou is a man who knows his job.

A Christmas Wedding.

Miss Georgina Baker, known to her many friends as "Georgie," and associated with the professional department of Keith Prowse's establishment in Poland-street for six or seven years, is leaving to be married. The lucky bridegroom is a member of the Stock Exchange, and we can only echo the sentiments of her many friends in the profession and wish her health, wealth and prosperity. The principals, colleagues and friends combined together and gave Miss Baker a very suitable wedding present in the shape of a dinner and tea service. Many other presents came from individual members of the staff, who will miss the happy and genial smile of "Georgie."

The Capitol, Southampton.

The Capitol Band at the Atherley Cinema, Southampton, is under the direction of Brian Gorman, who is a Billy Mayerl Gold Medal pianist. The members of this five-piece combination are proving themselves to be very popular to the large audiences that attend this theatre. The personnel of the band consists of A. Ward (bass); W. Baker (drums and tymps); F. Coles (violin); H. Soar (alto and soprano saxes, clarinet and violin); and Brian Gorman (piano).

Musical Broadcasts.

The completo "San Francesco D'Assisi," by G. Francesco Malipiero, will be broadcast from the Radio Station, Milan, on Boxing Day, at 9 p.m. It has recently been given with great success at Frankfort and other performances are being arranged in Munich and Cincinnati (U.S.A.). The first English performance will be given on May 28th, 1931, by the Philharmonic Choir, under C. Kennedy Scott.

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A Real Vagabond Song.

Four fox-trots come from Campbell Connelly's this week. In the first cover there is "Just Imagine" and "Sunny Days." "Just Imagine" is a splendid smooth unhurried number with an exceptionally good melody, which takes on a more playful mood in the "verse" scoring. The absent brass in the repeat chorus does not unbalance but heightens the effect especially with vocal chorus. The big interval drop in the chorus of "Sunny Days" is one of the first things which strikes the reader of this cute melody. It is another nice piece of orchestration, with the 'cello well looked after, and would make a fine number for Christmas fun.

"Singing a Vagabond Song" is a slow fox-trot. This number is a masterly one, the spirit of vagabondage is captured in the scores and when released by the orchestra does not stride away, but dawdles about in true vagabond style. It must not be thought from these remarks that the number is uninteresting as a dance. Your true vagabond is a happy individual and the spirit of the melody is untroubled joy. I think the lyric well worthy of a high place among recent publications. Brightness is assured by some fine snatches of brass and saxophone work. Backing this number is another slow fox-trot, 'Roamin' thru' the Roses, another composition which dallies with romance. There is, however, a subtle change of style which alone would make this a popular dance feature. This change is introduced by the trumpets and violin. There is also plenty of solo work for the trombone. A vocal harmony trio is included.

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EDGAR WHITE

Eugene Goossens' "Second Sonata" for violin and piano will be given by Albert Sammons and William Murdoch in Bradford on January 20th, 1931, and in London on February 4th, 1931.

Royal Academy of Music Awards.

The Westmorland Scholarship (male vocalists) has been awarded to Henry P. Cummings, a native of Dublin. The adjudicator was Mr. Roy Henderson. The Potter Exhibition (female pianists) has been awarded to Joan Boulter, a native of Clifton, Kathleen Fenton being highly commended and Kathleen Murray and Barbara Cumming commended. The adjudicator was Miss Kathleen Long.

The Battison Haynes Prize (Composition) has been awarded to Godfrey Robbins (a native of London), Joyce Clapham being commended. The adjudicator was Miss Katharine Eggar. The Philip Leslie Agnew Prize (Piano) has been awarded to Yelland Richards (a native of Leighton Buzzard), Harold Jaeger being highly commended and Cyril Gell commended. The adjudicators were Miss Katharine Goodson and Mr. Philip Leslie Agnew.

Portability v. Popularity.

The relative portability of various musical instruments has bearing on their popularity. It is true, as statistics show, that the musical instrument which goes everywhere with the owner, namely, the human voice, remains first favourite. But the piano, in spite of its comparative immobility, is easily second, leaving the violin a poor third and the flute, to say nothing of the penny whistle, "unplaced." The pipe organ, the only one of them all which is literally a permanent fixture, takes the booby prize, though the double bass, as might be expected, runs it close.

English Soprano Leaves for Canada.

Miss Joan Elwes, the well-known English soprano, has sailed by the "Adriatic" for Canada, where she has been engaged by the Canadian National Railways to broadcast on January 1st. On January 1st it is also intended that her voice shall be carried from one side of the Dominion to the other by means of a hook-up by the company's thirteen broadcasting stations. In her Canadian broadcast, Miss Elwes will render two songs specially composed for her by Sir Edward Elgar, and one of these has not yet been sung in England. In addition to her broadcasting, Miss Elwes will be the soloist with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, in Toronto.

A Popular Northern Conductor.

When Jimmy Campbell and his twenty orchestrians opened at the Preston New Victoria a few months ago, the town had almost forgotten the capabilities of the human orchestra in the cinema. Northern audiences have little regard for "canned" musical accompaniments. "Give us back our silent films and some real music" is the demand of every patron. And Jimmy Campbell satisfies them all. His opening programme on the stage with "William Tell" created a furore. His performances range from Tschaikovsky's "1812" and Liszt's "Second Hungarian

MR. JIMMY CAMPBELL.

Rhapsody" to "Desert Song" and "Jollity Farm." Mr. Campbell is also an accomplished soloist. He attains to a remarkable standard of performance on the violin, and doubles on the tenor saxophone. He began his career when seventeen years old at the Scala, South Shields, and as musical director has since held appointments at the Picture House, South Shields; the Queen's, South Shields; and Fenwick' Restaurant. At the age of twenty-six, he is now installed at Preston Palladium, attracting capacity business nightly.

West London Hospital Benefit.

The special Christmas variety programme put on last Saturday evening by Miss Kathleen Tacchi at the King's Theatre, Hammersmith, in aid of the West London Hospital, was conceived on generous lines. All the sprightly young fairies of Hammersmith seemed to be included in the Tacchi School dances, headed by Kathleen Tacchi herself, and with such able adjutants as Daphne and Joan Templeman, Minne Cook, Ernest Strachen and Valentine Nicholls.

A lively farce "Bacy Your Fancy!" from the pen of L. Compton-Rickett and Joseph Wright, was put across in brave style by Kathleen Maynard, Madge Brindley, Sybil Grant-Chester and Gordon Furnival. The variety element was provided by Senorita Asuncion Granados, the popular Spanish guitarist; Pepito Ruiz, the Spanish dancer; and Gladys Voile and Rex Bushell. The two last-mentioned, just back from their successes the Colonies, were in great form.

A thoroughly seasonable attraction was seen in the delightful children's ballet, "The Spirit of Christmas," composed and arranged by Rodney Eden.

Musicians' Ups and Downs.

The ups and downs which have filled the lives of composers of the world's greatest music are forcibly in evidence in the life of Gluck, the master-musician, who, in the eighteenth century, revolutionised opera. His childhood was spent in the poverty-stricken surroundings of a peasant's home. Later on, fortunately, his father was able to send him to a good school, where his gift for music led him to practise hard at the harpsichord and organ. Subsequently, a poor scholar at Prague University, he passed his vacations wandering through the country playing his violin at village festivals, taking payment chiefly in eggs, sleeping in barns and under haystacks. And he lived to become a rich man and one of the greatest musicians of all time.

Playing from Memory.

Not long ago an eminent pianist surprised his audience by carrying on to the platform and placing before him on the piano a copy of a new work which he was to play. Public and critics both made their remarks about it, some thinking it was a sign of weakness, others commending it as a wise precaution. Yet less than a hundred years ago it was exactly the other way about. To-day the longest and most difficult concertos are played, by famous artists and by beginners alike, entirely from memory, but in our grandparents' time, not even the shortest pieces were played without a copy. Mendelssonn was one of the first to adopt the new method, and comments were made as to his cleverness and his foolishness, and on the part of some of his critics as to his conceit, in playing works such as his own Songs Without Words and Schubert's Impromptus without the copy. To-day there are many conductors who direct orchestral scores and operas entirely from memory.

Musical Pride.

It is natural for an artist to consider his own instrument and his own method of performance to be the best, and sometimes the soloists are said to look down on those who play in orchestras or chamber music groups. These in their turn regard orchestral and chamber music as the greatest type of art. Most of these contentions are, however, carried on in a spirit of friendly rivalry, and not as in the case of a great pianist of a generation ago who, on being asked to join in a duet with another pianist, replied that he was not accustomed to being accompanied on his own instrument! Recently the violinist Ysaye made fun of a friend who had given up solo playing in order to devote his time to chamber music and had become leader of a string quartette which is now one of the most famous of its kind. Incidentally, he fell into rhyme, and wrote to his friend, "Quand on n'est pas assez fort, On forme un quattuor" which may be translated. "When success with solos we cannot get, One starts to form a string quartette."

The Viola.

The viola, an instrument of indispensable value in concerted music for stringed instruments, is gradually coming into vogue as a solo instrument. It has qualities of its own which deserve recognition. As the viola's highest string is A, five notes lower than the violin's highest string, its tone is not so brilliant as that of the violin, but it owns a richness of quality which the violin does not equal. It is particularly well suited to music of emotional appeal of the melodic sort, and less well suited to music of the brilliant display type. In the orchestra, as in the string quartette, the colour of the viola's tone is invaluable, and in many respects the student of the instrument has reason to be satisfied with his choice.

Pianist's Stage Act.

Bert Haar, the popular young pianist, is opening a variety season on January 1st. Later he is starting a stage act with Al Berlin's "Melodians."

WATER RATS CONCERT.

The concert at the Hippodrome on Sunday evening, December 21st, in aid of the funds of the Water Rats' charities, was undoubtedly a financial and social success, the house being splendidly filled and in fact crowded in most parts before the show began, as well it might be, seeing the wonderful programme prepared. Jessie Wildon and her ladies' band opened proceedings, and after a little comedy tracas between Billy Bennett, Charlie Austin and Will Hay, there appeared in quick succession, Louise Selkirk, cornettist; Charlie Hayes, he of the funny patter; Osborne and Perryer in one of their Cockney sketches; Leslie Weston in his most pointed stories; Will Fyffe, the canny sailor, and Jack Hylton and his boys. The fun continued to wax fast and furious in the hands of Fred Miller, Billy Bennett, Hilda Glyder, Charlie Austin, G. H. Elliott, Will Hay, Talbot O'Farrell and Nervo and Knox, whilst there were also others on the programme, including Naughton and Gold, Clarkson Rose, Norman Long, Wilson Hallett and Billy Caryll, but some of these were unable to appear owing to lack of time. Alf. Leonard and Jack Weaver were the musical directors, and the stage was under the direction of Arthur Stapley, aided, of course, by Seth Egbert, Billy Kay, and several willing helpers. In front, carefully watching the business end, were Joe Morrison and Stanley Damerell, whilst Dave O'Toole, Eddie Gray and several other Rats were in the vicinity. Noble work was done by the Lady Ratlings, who made themselves responsible for the programmes. Bob Beney, George Rhodes Parry and George Norton were three more who gave their support. Altogether a striking evening.

Declined With Thanks.

A famous violinist had just finished a recital at Queen's Hall, and was preparing to leave the building, when an individual of the "nouveau riche" type, who had been enraptured by the beauty of the performance, pushed his way noisily into the artist's room, and after having complimented the player, gave him a pressing invitation to dinner the following evening, adding, "You'll bring along your violin, of course."

Wearied with his recent exertions and a little annoyed at this palpable lack of etiquette, the violinist quietly made answer: "I thank you, sir, but my violin never dines."

AMERICA TELLS US WHAT TO DO.

By BRUCE SIEVIER.

Nobody would have been more disappointed than myself had Gracie Fields "flopped" in New York. She sang one of my early songs, but had to drop it. It was not good enough. I always admired her for trying. But if I commence to write about my admiration for Gracie I shall fill a volume, getting all poetic and finish by saying "nowt about nowt" that I meant to say.

At last we have been given first hand through the American critic Sime what America thought of Gracie Fields. But Sime's opinion of Gracie is beside the point that I'm trying to get at. It was her material that he denounced . . . *because she tried to teach the Americans how to sing American songs. Sime rightly drew comparisons.* He said that Lauder did not sing American songs. Will Fyffe did his own act composed of material written by Englishmen for an Englishman (Scotsman, sorry!)

Yet Gracie Fields arrived with American "plug" numbers four; English songs—four. She won through by her wonderful personality, but she could have created a "furore."

Never before has such a moral been pointed to our booking managers. Never has it been so strongly emphasised to artists that they should have their own material, their own individuality and their own act. The man who comes on the stage and sings a number that everybody knows isn't an artist—the man who first made that song a success is the artist (with the assistance of the writers whom everybody forgets).

An English act should remember that Golders Green, Hampstead, Brixton and Walham Green are neighbourhoods that girls live in, not sweeties, cuties nor yet "babies." That when the milkman, or the postman or the 'bus conductor answers you he says, "Yes, Sir," not "Oh, kay, chief!" and that therefore a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles, a nasal intonation, knock-knees when taking a call, nor yet all the spearmint in the world will ever bring out his or her *own* personality.

An artist was never a person who copies somebody else and, therefore, until we remember that British artists should sing British songs, we shall remain with that great inferiority complex which we have been kidded into

I am glad to say that there is a definite move towards a "boom" in British songs. Mr. Feldman has created a precedent by sending out four all-British numbers to his Band Club — "Cuban Love Song," "My Blonde," "I've got a little love song" and "Remember Me." Jack Payne, Marius B Winter and Jack Kerr have been particularly conspicuous for the large number of British songs they have been broadcasting. We know that Horatio Nicholls (Lawrence Wright's pal!) is spending £10,000 on a special all-British campaign. Francis Day and Hunter are doing quite a fair amount of British material, and I hear that we shall see many works by Pat Thayer to the fore in the course of the next few months.

When the Americans tell us to have "British songs for American people," it is surely time for us to "*sing and play British.*"

An Admirer of Genius.

Mozart was a very great admirer of his master Haydn, and never missed an opportunity of impressing the originality and masterly character of Haydn's work upon others. One day he was at a concert with Kozeluch, a popular and capable composer of that time, at which a new quartet of Haydn's was played. At one point Haydn had written something that was very bold and modern, at which Kozeluch whispered to Mozart: "I would not have done that." "No, neither would I," replied Mozart; "and do you know why? Neither you nor I could have invented such a splendid idea." Kozeluch, being of a jealous nature, never quite forgave Mozart for making such a remark.

Beethoven's Deafness.

Beethoven in his early years was not only a great composer, he was also a great pianist. When he became deaf he continued to play the piano, and many of his admirers assured him that he was as wonderful a performer as ever. This seems not to have been a fact, however, and could not well be a fact if the beauty of his piano-tone is the mark of the great pianist. Spohr, who was a friend of Beethoven, records an impression of Beethoven's playing as he heard it when Beethoven was deaf. He wrote:—"It was obvious that Beethoven heard literally nothing. In forte passages he played so loudly that the wires crashed, and in the piano passages so softly that whole groups of notes were entirely inaudible. Deafness is a terrible affliction for anyone, but for the master it is beyond comparison."

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VARIETY IN THE CINEMA

By VIATOR.

The Plaza.

I saw another of those Francis A. Mangan productions here last week, and I think that it was the most beautiful he has yet given us. It was called "The Enchanted Staircase," and there was a massed ballet of Plaza-Tiller Girls and Carlton-Tiller Girls, with Miss Kathleen Burgess as the vocalist. Mr. David Paget and his fine orchestra opened with "Der Rosenkavalier" music, and when the curtain went up, Miss Kathleen Burgess, daintily dressed in a silver confection, used her sweet soprano voice to distinct advantage in "Dance away to-night." This was the kind of theme song running through the show. Then the curtain went up, and we saw a staircase with the steps slanting away. Twelve girls in crinoline frocks danced in good style. Later, the staircase moved downwards and there was a parade down it of pretty girl in various bizarre red costumes. They were followed by twelve more dancers in silver and red and they danced the Chevalier March in captivating style. The finale was one of the mot picturesque things I have ever seen. At the top of the stairs was a lady with a long silver train stretching to the bottom, and grouped on each s[illegible]nt down the steps were girls also with long silver trains that seemed to cover the whole stage. This show drew loud and prolonged applause. I always admire the way the Plaza programme is put through under Mr. Earl St. John's expert direction. There are no tedious waits but a continuity that is all to the advantage of patrons. "The Spoilers" was the big film last week. This week, Nancy Carroll and Charles Rogers in "Follow Through" is the big Christmas attraction, with the usual supporting features on stage and screen.

The New Victoria.

"Young Woodley," with Frank Lawton and Madeleine Carroll, an all-British picture with an all-British cast, be it noted, was the big film here last week. A rare treat for music lovers is provided here each week in the association of the De Groot Trio with the New Victoria Full Symphony Orchestra. We had a taste of the good things to come in the organ selection—Leslie Stuart's "Lily of Laguna"—and when Mr. De Groot himself came on to conduct the orchestra in Lehar's "The Land of Laughter," there was loud and insistent applause. "The Merry Widow" selections were also capitally rendered, and Mr. De Groot had to appear in front of the tabs at the close and give us another solo on his violin. Miss Ann Penn's mimicry is famous in every branch of the entertainment industry. I have seen her in the theatre, on the variety stage, in cabaret and in the cinema, and she is extremely popular everywhere. "How d'ye do," her opening number, enables her soon to get on good terms with her audience, and her subsequent work includes very clever impressions of Gracie Fields, Nellie Wallace and other stars. Myron, Pearl and Co., in a superb dancing act, entitled "Dance Echoes," was the other turn. This week, on the stage here is A. Oumansky's ballet, "The Leopards."

Brixton Astoria.

"Be Yourself," with Fanny Brice, and "The Girl Said No," with William Haines, Marie Dressler and Polly Moran, were the film attractions here last week, whilst on the stage were Jack Barty and Jack and Sylvia Kellaway. Jack Barty was attired in marvellous blue check plus-fours, and he was enthusiastically received. All his humour, and he has some indescribably funny patter, is of the type that one doesn't mind one's maiden aunt listening to. He kept the audience in very merry mood. Jack and Sylvia Kellaway, too, thrilled every one with their delightful dancing. They are terpsichorean artists of the highest class.

Mile End Empire.

Jack Martell was holding the attention of a most interested audience when I looked in at this hall. His natural, unforced humour as he sang and told his stories proved him a most up-to-date and versatile performer. He seems to get on real intimate terms with the audience and in a most informal way simply chats to them, twirling the while his grey bowler, with which he seems to do some extraordinary gyrations. Dean and Ross, in their dancing act, "On With the Dance," provide the other variety item, and in a variety of steps and styles they danced delightfully in their well presented act, the ballet toe-dance of the lady partner evoking great enthusiasm. "The Flirting Widow" was the big film here.

Streatham Astoria.

The variety at the Astoria, Streatham, last week, was on the musical side. On the screen we had two very good pictures in "Dumbells in Ermine" and "Second Wife." The former contained some good comedy, whilst the latter showed one what to expect if one married a second time. On the stage, Melville Gideon and his Symphony Band provided a real feast of music, also an introduction with many novel features. The band setting was very pretty and appropriate for the time of year. Under Mr. Gideon's able directorship the orchestra played delightfully "The Love Parade" and other numbers. His new number, entitled "A Little Love Song," was also a big success. The instruction on how to play the drum was very funny. The pupil was requested to sit on a device which looked more like an instrument of torture of bygone days, at the top of which was a huge hammer, and when this fell on his head it was a signal to strike the drum. This proved a quick and effective method of tuition, resulting in roars of laughter. The acrobatic dancer was also very good; he seemed to be able to twist his body with perfect ease into weird positions. The final scene was well conceived; when the curtain rose it revealed the musicians dressed in period costumes playing their instruments outside an inn whilst the snow fell in realistic fashion.

The Astorias.

At the Astoria Theatres, now associated with Paramount and the Plaza Theatre, Piccadilly Circus, the programmes for this week are as follows:—

Brixton Astoria.—Maurice Chevalier in "Innocents of Paris," and Harold Lloyd in "For Heaven's Sake." On the stage, Melville Gideon and his New Symphonic Band, from the Chevalier season at the Dominion Theatre: Los Cottrillos, in an acrobatic novelty, and the Astoria Christmas Waits.

At Old Kent Road Astoria, Conrad Nagel and Lila Lee in "Second Wife," and Arthur Lake and Olive Borden in "Dance Hall." On the stage Carre and Carlotta, the Adagio dancers, and Du Calion with humorous persiflage on the unsupported ladder. Godowsky and his orchestra and Roberto at the organ also contribute to the programme.

At Streatham Astoria, the pictures are "The Flirting Widow," with Dorothy Mackaill and Basil Rathbone, and "The Runaway Bride," with Mary Astor and Lloyd Hughes. On the stage, Britain's most famous radio artist, Albert Sandler, the world-famed violinist, with Sydney Ffoulkes at the piano and Frank Leonard, 'cellist, together with Michael Doré and his orchestra, and Bollington at the organ.

At the Finsbury Park Astoria, the pictures are "Children of Pleasure," with Lawrence Grey and Benny Rubin, and "For Heaven's Sake," with Harold Lloyd. On the stage, Odali Careno, the world-famous prima donna, and "The Jewel Bracelet," a Francis Mangan production, with the Plaza Tiller Girls, the latest Parisian novelty. Anton and his orchestra and Pattman at the organ also contribute to the programme.

The Alhambra.

An exclusive pre-released Fox film production, "Just Imagine," is being presented at the Alhambra Theatre this week. This picture is preceded by Billy Cotton and his band on the stage, and an artistic and daring dance display by the acro-dancers, Gerardo and Adair, in period costumes; a "talkie" interest film, entitled "Strange as it Seems"; and Movietone News and Paramount News. The latest cinema sensation, the Wonder Screen, is being installed, and will be used during the showing of the feature film.

CLUB AND CABARET.

By VIATOR.

The Roadhouse.

Harry Adams' popular club in Leicester-square seems to be the big rendezvous now for professionals. I went in to see the trial turns audition the other evening, and found numerous friends. I sat with Jerry Verno, who opened on Thursday at the Hippodrome in "The Maid of the Mountains." Mr Carl Lacey opened—he was announced as a vocalist, but the dramatic emphasis he put into "Dancing with tears in my eyes" and "Song of the dawn" was rather comic. Little Lena had some style about her, and she sang "We must all pull together" with a sprightly dance following, and concluded with a solo terpsichorean effort. Hammer and Shepherd pattered, but I could discover no new "gag." Other turns were Dot Hayward (song and dance), Reg Clifford (comedy songs), Frank Watts (baritone), Ross and Gregson (comedy patter and songs), and Evelyn Lavatta (singer). The regular cabaret at the Roadhouse last week was a real good show, and included Regina West, Alan Shires and Evelyn Gardner.

Locarno.

The new restaurant is to be opened to the public on New Year's Eve. They are very busy here with preparations for Christmas and New Year parties and balls, although the ordinary business shows no signs of falling off at all. Robert Sielle and Annette Mills demonstrated the "Moochi" all last week, and they proved themselves not only first-class demonstrators and dancers, but expert showmen. Laurie Johnson and his band opened the show with a good selection, then Miss Mills appeared, dressed in brown loose trousers and a long pink smock. Her dance of the "Moochi" in its original form gave one a good idea of how it should be danced, particularly as this was followed immediately by Mr. Sielle and Miss Mills dancing it in modern ballroom style. Then Mr. Sielle gave a practical demonstration lecture. He has a quiet, charming style, and his explanations accompanied by footwork were really good. Miss Mills having changed into ballroom attire, she and her partner again demonstrated the new dance, and Mr. Sielle afterwards partnered numerous ladies in the room in it. A very good show this, and so was the cycle act of Will Power and Page, which thrilled the audience no end. It is a capital turn, well presented, and this duo well deserved the enthusiastic reception they received.

The Cosmo.

Mr. Jesse Jacobson, looking as debonair as ever, told me something of the Cosmo Club's activities during the New Year when I saw him at the popular Wardour-street club last week. There is to be a big special gala on New Year's Eve, at which the cabaret turns will include Alec Kelleway and Jack and Sylvia Kellaway. Then on the first Wednesday in the New Year the usual kiddies' party will be given. Santa Claus, Clown Argo, conjurors and other entertainers will amuse the children. Another big night is the annual fancy dress ball on January 15th. Last week, Miss Helen Breen, late star of "The Vagabond King," delighted her hearers with several songs well sung. I liked her rendering of "My Hero" from "The Chocolate Soldier" best. The Four Malinoffs, described as America's sensational dancers, also put over a wonderful terpsichorean act, in which whirls and twirls, thrills and spills were equally allied.

Trocabaret.

The élite of England's variety artists, together with some excellent performers new to London audiences, will appear in "Trocabaret," the late-dinner show at the Trocadero, during January. Among those who will help to start the New Year in the right spirit are: Ann Penn, the brilliant mimic; Jean Florian, the extraordinary juggler; Rupert Hazel and Elsie Day, in "Harmonylarity"; Adam-Amelia-Florence Di Gatano, "Stepping out of Character," by Frank Di Gatano; Coram and "Jerry"; Edith Faulkner in comedy and character cameos; Lucien and Ashour Hockney, wonderful juvenile dancers; Clapham and Dwyer, the famous wireless and vaudeville stars, in "A Spot of Bother"; the Four Harmony Kings, America's foremost coloured quartette; Will Hay and company in an episode of St. Michael's; Marjorie Stevens, Lewis Barber and Eddie Orpwood in Snappy Styles and Steps; George Hurd, the Royal juggler; Henderson and Lennox and the Four Girl Friends.

Empress Rooms.

The cabaret at the Empress Rooms during January will also be as bright and diversified an entertainment as ever. The artists include: Jean Florian, extraordinary juggler; Adam-Amelia-Florence Di Gatano, "Stepping out of Character," by Frank Di Gatano; Lucien and Ashour Hockney, wonderful juvenile dancers; Marjorie Stevens, Lewis Barbour and Eddie Orpwood in Snappy Styles and Steps; the Four Harmony Kings, America's foremost coloured quartette; George Hurd, the royal juggler; Henderson and Lennox and the Four Girl Friends.

Murray's.

Murray's had a big Christmas children's party last Saturday, when the kiddies spent a very jolly afternoon. A fancy dress parade, presents, crackers, toys, souvenirs, entertainment, games and dancing were all included in the programme. A Boxing Day gala and New Year's Eve gala are forthcoming features.

Grosvenor House.

The Welsh Miners are proving a big success at Grosvenor House. They were discovered first singing in the street! I looked in at this beautiful hotel last week and found a big supper crowd being entertained by the Wiere Brothers, three musical boys, in a versatile speciality which brought down the house. Anyway, they were so successful that their engagement was prolonged to this week.

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